

west hartford life

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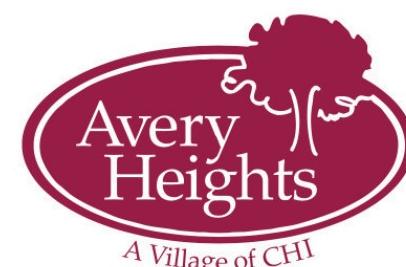
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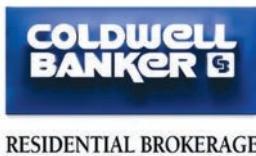
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March 2017

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"You are probably more apt to be in probate court than you are in any other court."

— Judge Owen Egan

See story page 25

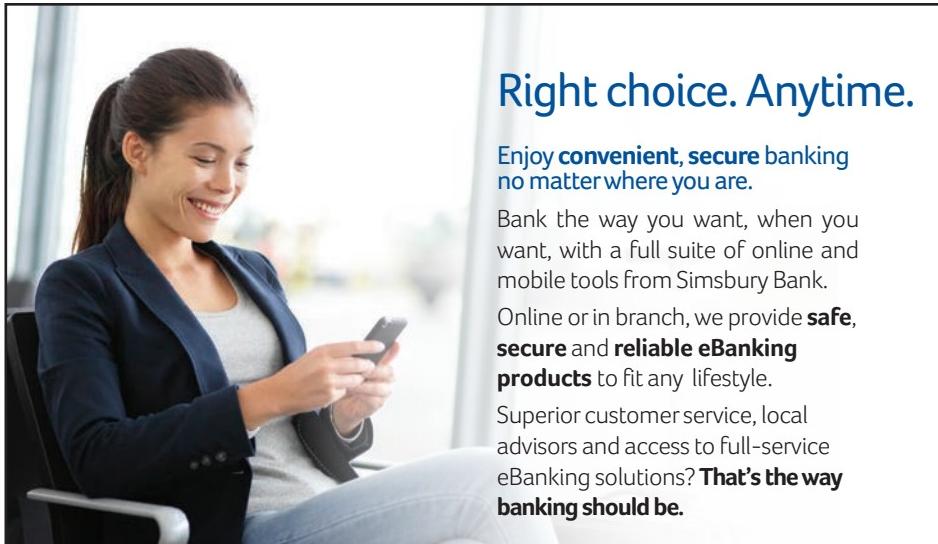
ON THE COVER

Landon Edwards and Iriliz Cardona, students at Charter Oak International Academy, review their selection of art while choosing a project.

Photo by Alicia B. Smith

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Courtesy photos

The art of recycled junk

Local architect fills his home with found, fabricated and repurposed items that fit his eclectic nature

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Architect Jim Healy has designed state-of-the-art schools, modern office buildings and renovated historic houses, but when it comes to his own home, he keeps it small and full of eclectic vintage pieces. Everywhere you look are details to acknowledge, admire and appreciate.

"I have been building furniture my entire life and my style has never changed. I have always been drawn to old, crusty and rusty pieces with a history, with a soul," he said. "I love colors that evoke nature – the greens of a dense forest floor, the earth tones of terra firma and the intense reds of a setting sun."

The armoires, cabinets, tables and lamps are both simple and functional. Some he found at tag sales, flea markets and antique shows, but most he built from repurposed items and "new wood" from The Home Depot that he distressed to look old, meticulously stenciling graphics and adding found details.

Each piece tells a story – be it an actual story from the past or a fictional interpretation he creates.

One example is the shelving unit in his kitchen.

"The whole thing was designed around two vintage Coca-Cola bottle openers," he said, pointing to them on either end of the piece and explaining he found them wired together at an antique show. Going out to dinner afterwards,

he sketched a display piece that he envisioned would have existed 85 years ago in an old general store.

"It was built from new wood and then heavily distressed. I wanted it to appear worn from years of touch," he said.

While it fits perfectly on a kitchen wall, it was first built for the store – New Frontier – that he and his then wife ran on Farmington Avenue from 1990-95. Located where The Beadoir is now, the shop sold vintage furniture and home accessories.

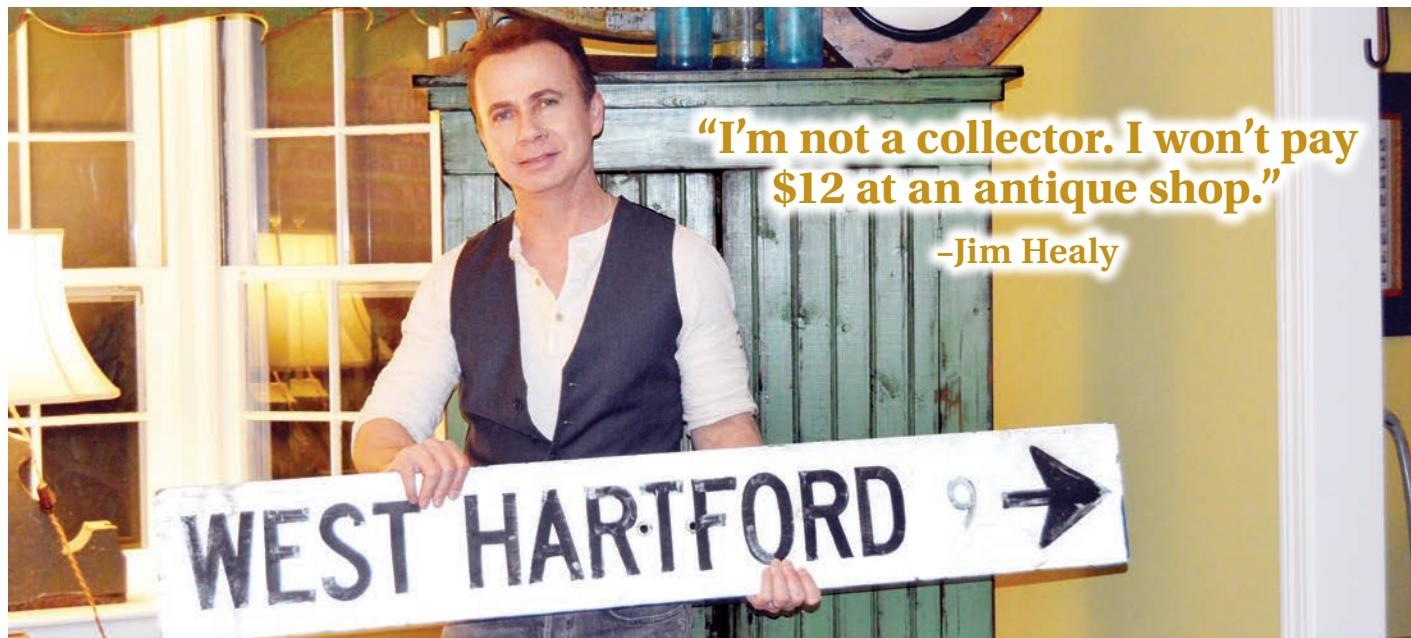
It was because of the store that Healy was invited to have his house featured in the By Design 1990 House and Garden Tour sponsored by the University of Hartford. That year, he said, all the homes

chosen were those of architects and interior designers.

In 1991, his renovations were featured in "Northeast Magazine" and in 2011 "Create and Decorate Magazine" did a two-page spread about how "the junk architect ... restores, revives and refinishes industrial scrap."

Most recently, his home was chosen to be in "Prairie Style" magazine. The current issue features a nine-page spread showing many of the rooms in his 1,200-square-foot cape along with the collections they contain.

The two-day photo shoot for the design magazine was done in October 2015, which also published a story on the furniture he makes in its July 2016 issue.



Jim Healy holds a vintage sign in front of an armoire, which was the first piece he built for his house.

In addition to about 150 pieces he built while the store was in operation – working full-time as an architect and helping with the business nights and weekends – he has built a number of pieces for his home. The first was the green armoire that holds his television.

"I'd never build an armoire before. I just kind of winged it,"

Healy said.

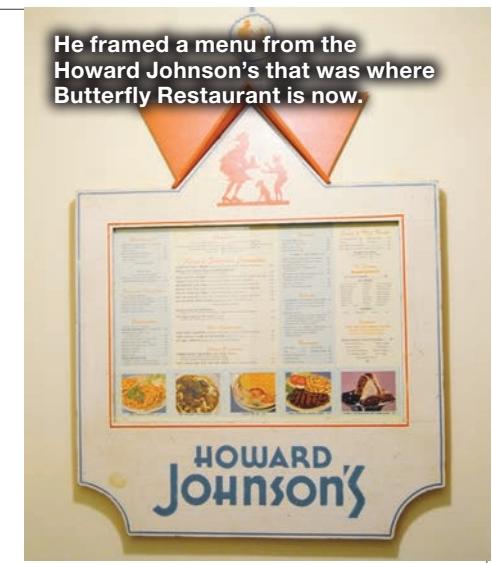
The piece was in the store for about a year, prompting orders for many more.

Healy grew up in Hartford, moved to West Hartford in 1973 and graduated from Conard High in 1977. In one of his shop classes there, he built a coffee table he still has.

"It's a great piece, it just doesn't go with the house," he said of the table that alone occupies the attic. "It's been there for 30 years," he said.

At Hartford State Technical College, he earned his degree and architect's license, and is currently employed at a firm in Farmington

He doesn't remember a time he wasn't making something.



Photos by Lynn Woike



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When Jim Healy saw the wire laundry basket, he imagined it with a glass top to serve as a side table. The lamp is constructed from spindles found at a flea market and scraps of copper pipe.

Photo by Lynn Wolfe



A wire basket holds vintage gas price numbers.

A photo shows him at 9 months, happily banging wooden pegs with a hammer as his grandfather holds the Playskool Cobblers Bench.

"My grandfather could build anything and when I was 2 or 3 or 4 I would just sit in his workshop and watch him."

At 5, Healy got to use some of the tools.

In the following years, he began looking for junk.

"We'd find old shutters and trim from houses and mantles. We'd use the wood to build things like go carts ... and I just kept building stuff my whole life. I never stopped," he said of designing and repurposing. "I knew I was going to be an architect."

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He's been in the house now for almost 30 years. He built his dining room table out of copper pipe, a display table from old scaffolding, and lamps from a megaphone, a porch spindle and a flag pole base, and two corbels sandwiched together.

In his bedroom, he built a mantel. An old sugar mold holds candles and creates the feeling of a real fireplace.

"I repurpose everything," Healy said.

Speaking of his finds, he said, "I can walk into an antique shop or flea market and know immediately if I can use it for something. Immediately I'll know, so I don't have to think about

it, like, 'What can I do with that?' [Because] if I have to think that, I don't buy it. I need to know what I'm going to do with it."

Along with building furniture, Healy builds collections.

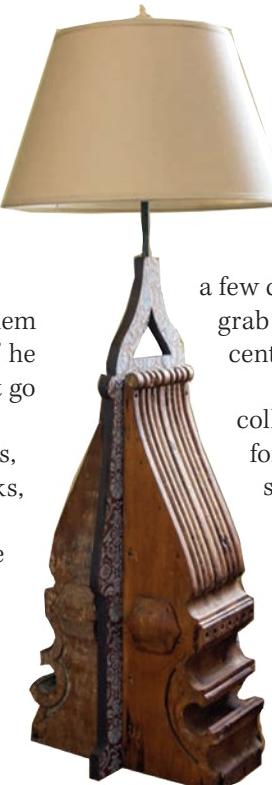
"It looks like I collect them because I have a collection," he said, explaining. "I don't go looking for them."

There are oil cans, advertising yard sticks, whisk brushes, cobbler's tools, gas price numbers, paint brushes and antique mirrors arranged throughout the rooms.

"I'm not a collector.

... I won't pay \$12 at an antique shop," he said.

Rather, he scours tag sales, flea markets and estate sales. New Britain and Newington



are among his favorite places.

His pop bottle collection began in the 1980s when he found a dozen of them at a tag sale for a few dollars. For years, he'd grab all those he found for 50 cents.

"I don't buy them to collect them; I buy them for the graphics. They have such incredible vintage graphics on them. That's what interested me. They were little pieces of artwork. It wasn't just collecting bottles, it was collecting art."

His collection of more than 400 – which contains no duplicates – span from the 1930s to the 1960s, and are displayed in the kitchen and an upstairs room.

The shallow shelves that hold the bottles in what was a bedroom are decorated with vintage bottle

caps Healy found "in one shot in a bag at the Farmington Polo Grounds antique show." There were hundreds of them and they'd never been crimped. He turned them into thumbtacks and attached them onto the shelves.

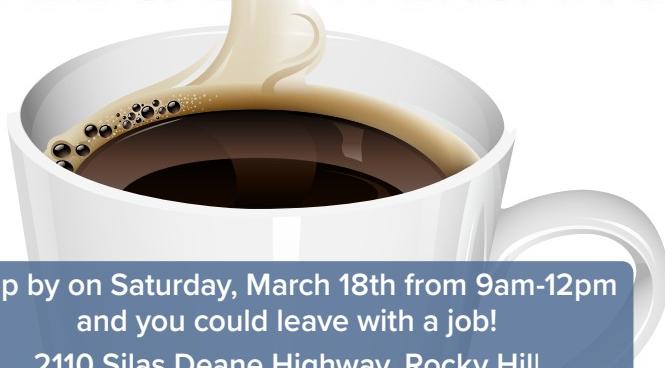
He's bought old signs for \$10 that he would have gladly paid \$100 to get, and today he might have to.

"Because of all the TV shows," Healy said, "things that used to cost me \$10 years ago now cost \$100."

There's always room for a few more construction-related items, his home is already full of his most treasured pieces. Still, he said "I'll never stop going to tag sales and flea markets." **WHL**



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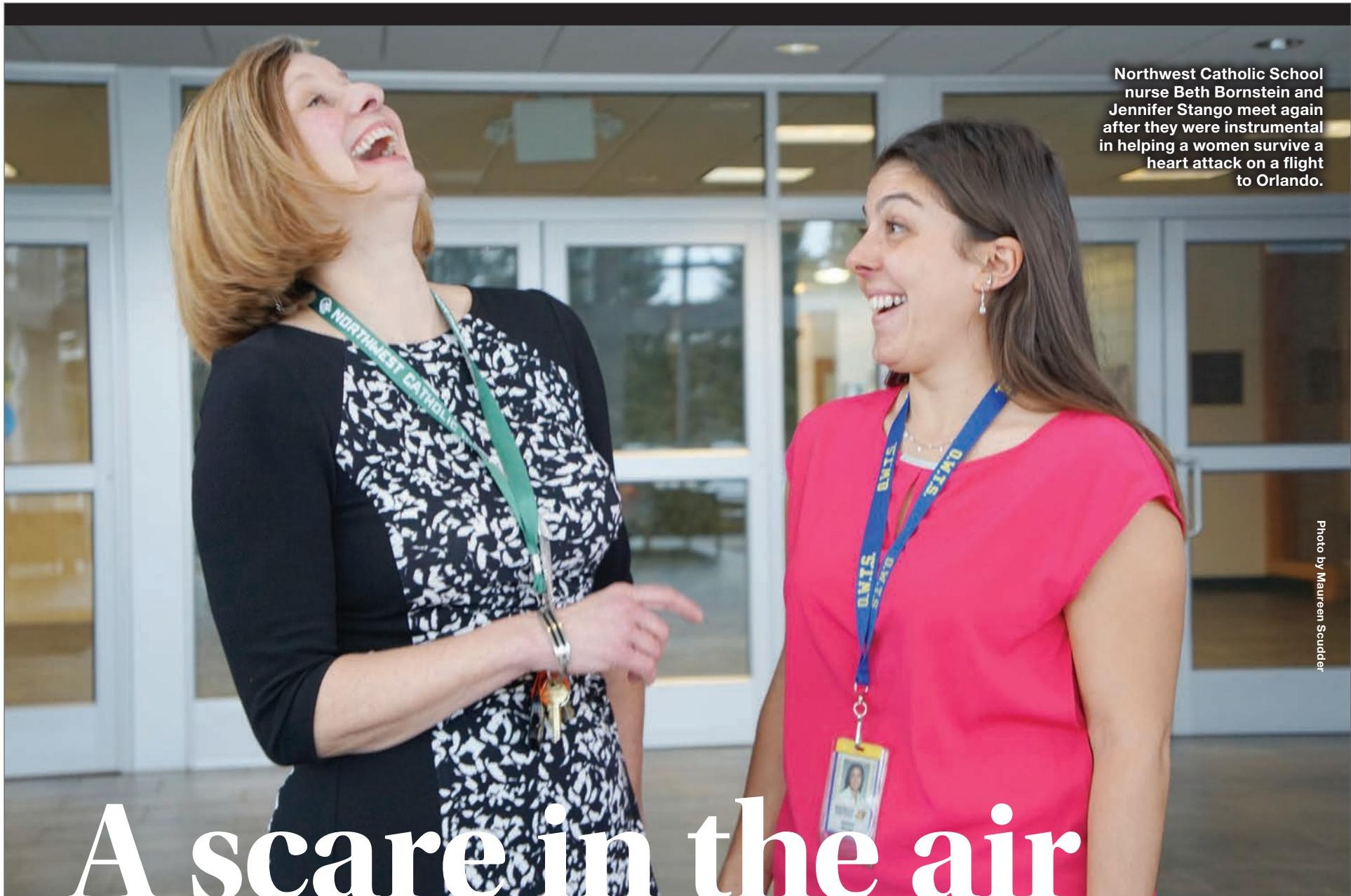
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Northwest Catholic School nurse Beth Bornstein and Jennifer Stango meet again after they were instrumental in helping a women survive a heart attack on a flight to Orlando.

Photo by Maureen Scudder

A scare in the air

Women help fellow passenger after heart attack

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

The two women embraced in the hall at Northwest Catholic High School. It was the first time they had seen each other since their surprising introduction at the beginning of the year. It was also less stressful.

Beth Bornstein and Jennifer Stango had each been minding her own business aboard a Southwest Airlines flight from Hartford to Orlando. Stango was on her way to football tryouts while Bornstein would be going on to Austin to visit her parents.

About an hour into the ride, a woman suddenly jumped out of her seat and began to yell and cry hysterically.

"Somebody said, 'Is anybody a doctor or a nurse,'" Stango said.

While neither title applies to her, Stango is a certified CPR instructor and she immediately got out of her seat to see if she could help.

Also responding to the question was Bornstein, who currently

A female passenger had suddenly vomited and then went unconscious.

A third passenger was able to help the two women lay the patient flat across the seats while Bornstein began chest compressions and Stango unpacked and readied the onboard AED device.

"They are pretty much fool-proof," she said, explaining that the machine talks the user through each step.

Fortunately, the machine is able to determine if its use is necessary when the button to administer the shock is pushed. By the time the machine was ready to go, the patient had a pulse, had come to and asked what had happened.

It wasn't certain, but it seemed apparent the woman had had a heart attack.

She told her helpers that she had recently been hospitalized with pneumonia. A pharmacist on the flight said some of her medications might have contributed to her condition.

The pilot, who had been alerted to the situation, soon

**"You just do it.
It's routine."**
- Beth Bornstein

serves as the school nurse at Northwest Catholic High School in West Hartford, and who has more than 20 years experience as an emergency room and intensive care unit nurse.

Bornstein administered 100 compressions by the time the AED was ready to be used.

Stango has been trained to use the device but had never used it on a patient.

announced that the flight would make an emergency landing in Raleigh. Stango said it was the fastest landing she had ever experienced – completed without the standard instructions of putting seats in an upright position and fastening seat belts.

Flight attendants were able to get passengers settled back into their seats, offering Stango a free drink and letting Bornstein get to her carry on so she could change her clothes.

"You just do it," Bornstein said of being called into action during a critical health-related event. She said it comes from her years of experience in nursing. "It's routine."

It might be for some, but not for everyone. Stango said for her it was a tough few minutes and it was not until she was back in her own seat that she realized of what had just taken place.

As soon as the plane came to a stop, paramedics boarded to attend to the woman and take her to a nearby hospital. As they were attending to her, another passenger suddenly went into diabetic shock. The paramedics also cared for this passenger.

Both Stango and Bornstein said they were relieved they did not have to jump into action again. Although they thought these types of things tend to come in threes, they were hopeful the excitement was done for the day.

They later learned that passenger they had helped was a 67-year old woman named Joyce from Massachusetts. She was flying to Phoenix to meet her husband and was traveling with her granddaughter.

Bornstein, who was sitting directly behind the patient, explained the situation could have turned out far worse than it did. When she began to apply compressions to the woman's chest the patient's skin was cold and her eyes were sealed shut, which are not good signs.

The longer you go with CPR, the less chance there is

of surviving, Bornstein said.

Southwest Airlines gave the women a voucher for a free flight for their quick thinking.

"You were very calm for a not being a medical person," Bornstein told Stango.

The two women have become friends and keep in touch.

"Me and Beth talked the rest of the way there," Stango said of their flight, which eventually continued on to Orlando while some passengers were required to remain in Raleigh as they would miss their connecting flights in Florida.

Bornstein, a Simsbury resident, previously worked as a school nurse in the Simsbury school district and has been at Northwest for a year. The action on this particular flight was not the first time she has stepped in to help a stranger in distress. She assisted a man while waiting at the DMV one day and helped to get immediate assistance for a colleague at her school who had an aneurysm.

Stango, an Oakville resident, is a social studies teacher and assistant football coach at Oliver Wolcott Technical School in Torrington. She played football and her school's coach recruited her to coach with him. She also is certified to teach CPR and is trained to use an AED.

Stango, who is getting married in October, is hopeful that more public places will acquire the lifesaving device. She stresses that they save lives and are easy to use.

Bernstein said she noticed the Baltimore Airport, near the Southwest Airlines gate has a CPR/AED on display, complete with a mannequin, helping to teach how to administer CPR.

"I think it's so cool they have that," she said, encouraging others to get trained in CPR and to learn the warning signs of heart attacks.

"You never know," Bornstein said of their inflight treatment. "In our case it was a success story." **WHL**



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LIFE long ago

Looking back at the town's history

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Along the rear wall of a vault in the town clerk's office are records that go back to the beginning of the town's incorporation. Some oversized journals have handwritten entries. Some books are dusty. Most seem largely ignored. On their pages are the decisions, data and details that have shaped the town. Each month we will look into those volumes and provide a sampling of what was happening at different periods in time.

125 years ago: 1892

On March 4 the town received \$335.25 from the State School Fund.

On March 30 the town was paid \$9.50 for the use of town hall.

120 years ago: 1897

March 8, at a regular meeting of the Selectmen and Sewer Commission, there was a discussion regarding the possible establishment of a home for incurable children, east of the railway tracks near Charter Oak Park. It was also voted that the selectmen look up the records in regard to the disputed boundary between the property of the town and that formerly of the Baptist Society, and report the result to the officers of the Baptist Convention.

110 years ago: 1907

The Selectmen and Sewer Commission heard a request March 11 for a compromise by C.O. Moore of Sage Allen & Co. on the assessments against John E. Camp, in which considerable interest was due; the request was not allowed.

It was decided to order enough pipe to lay an eight-inch cast iron water main in New Britain Avenue from the Hartford line westerly to a point near New Park Avenue and a six-inch main from that point to a point near the east line of the land of John Ziegler.

100 years ago: 1917

Among the bills approved for payment in March by the selectmen and commissioners was \$132.75 for coal for town hall et al, and \$692.54 to Hartford Electric Light Co. for streetlights.

On March 16, 15 interested persons inquired about the double tracking and improvement of Farmington Avenue west of Main Street to Foot's Corners, or rather, Mountain Road. They were assured that town authorities were ready to go ahead when the work was appropriated.

On March 23, residents requested Abbotsford Avenue be improved because it was "a mass of deep clay mud."

A petition for sidewalks on New Britain Avenue and East Street was presented March 30, as was a petition for macadam, lights and sidewalks on Lancaster Street between



James Livingston was appointed to be the dog warden in 1917.



J.H. Fish attempts to drive his horse-drawn meat truck along a muddy street in town.

Prince Street and Farmington Avenue.

It was also voted at that meeting to appoint James Livingston dog warden for the ensuing year.

75 years ago: 1942

The Town Council adopted a budget for fiscal year March 1, 1942 to February 28, 1943 of \$2,157,358. Of that, \$622,747 was for the Board of Education, \$72,000 was for ash and garbage collection, \$156,026 was for the Fire Department, \$168,860 was for the Police Department (that included \$50 for food for prisoners and \$2,000 for uniforms), and \$58,170 for the Department of Welfare. Given a Grand List of \$96,298,000, the tax levy was set at 18.5 mills. The expected collection rate was 92 percent.

At its March 9 meeting, the Town Council approved minimum square footage for living quarters as follows:

Residence AA Districts – 900 square feet on the ground floor or total square footage of 1,050 with a minimum of 700 on the ground floor.

Residence A Districts – 750 square feet or total square footage of 850 with a minimum of 550 on the ground floor.

Residence B Districts – 650 square feet on the ground floor or total square footage of 700 with a minimum of 450 on the ground floor.

Residence C, D and E Districts – 600 square feet on the ground floor or 450 on the ground floor with a total square footage of 650.

Utility rooms, garages, bay windows, outside vestibules and porches or verandas – open or closed – were not to be included when calculating the square footage. To qualify as a living space, a second floor had to have built-in stairway access.

The March 17 meeting was adjourned one minute after it was called to order with no business being transacted.

50 years ago: 1967

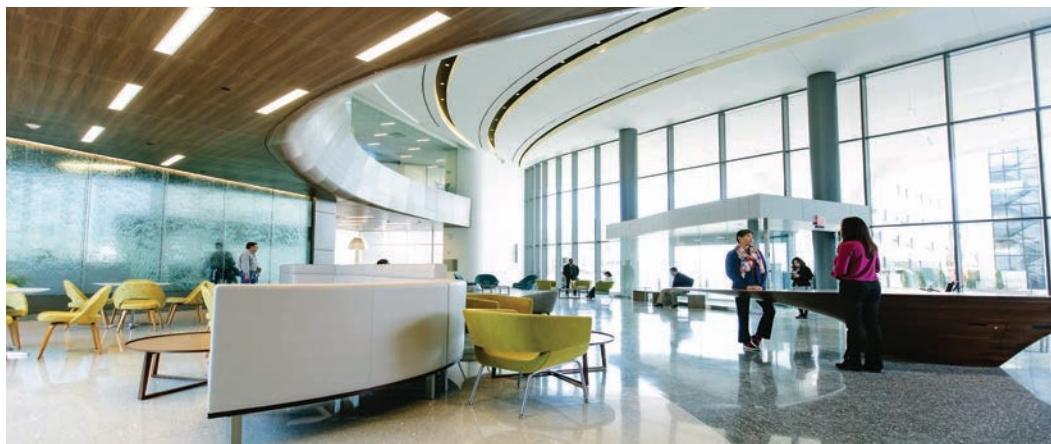
The Board of Tax Review reported to the Town Council on March 14 that after variations, the Grand List of October 1, 1966 totaled \$349,411,581.

A referendum held March 14 to approve the design and financing of a new high school was defeated 6,753 to 5,631.

At its March 28 Town Council meeting, a public hearing was held on the Five Acre Special Development District to increase the number of stores in the proposed shopping center at Prospect Avenue and Kane Street (approved February 24, 1966) from 13 to 18 stores.

25 years ago: 1992

On March 10, the Town Council set the price of a weekday season ticket at Buena Vista Golf Course for players ages 65 and older as well as players 12-18 at \$90. Players were required to pay greens fees on weekends and holidays. At the same meeting, councilors were presented with a proposal to divide Joe's American Bar and Grill into two separate restaurants. Joe's would remain



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Photos courtesy of the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society



Voters did not approve a referendum to replace this high school in 1967.

on the lower level with a new Northern Italian restaurant, Papa Razzi, established on the upper level. The space, in Corbins Corner, already had two kitchens.

20 years ago: 1997

On March 11, the Town Council proposed a nine-month moratorium on permits for adult-oriented establishments while their impact on the community was to be studied.

15 years ago: 2002

An ordinance prohibiting the use of public streets to conduct commercial activity was withdrawn at the March 11 Town Council meeting. At the same meeting, the council received the 2002-3 fiscal year budget in which was a proposal that the town acquire more than 6,000 streetlights from Northeast Utilities as a way to gain "significant savings in utility costs."

The council adopted an

amendment to appoint a special committee to design a new administrative service model and accompanying "combined services" implementation plan to consolidate services independently provided by the Board of Education and the town.

10 years ago: 2007

The Town Council was presented with a budget of \$209 million, a \$12.8 million or 6.6 percent increase. Of that, \$122 million was for

education, \$70.7 million was for the town and \$16.5 million for capital improvements. The council also adopted an ordinance permitting the establishment of religious uses in industrial zones.

5 years ago: 2012

The Town Council changed the number of polling places from 20 to nine – with three in each state representative's district – at its March 13 meeting. Each new district encompassed roughly 3,000-5,000 voters; the smallest being District 9 with 3,266 voters and the largest being District 3 with 5,065 voters.

On March 27, it heard details about the \$138,890,000 education budget request – an increase of 4.6 percent; and passed a resolution honorably discharging Police Dog Reign from duty and giving custody to Det. Rosario Savastra, who had been his handler since he went on duty in 2006.

1 year ago: 2016

Director of Finance Peter Privitera presented a \$269.3 million budget to the Town Council March 22. It represented a 4.4 percent, or \$11.3 million, increase in spending.

The Town Council heard testimony March 22 regarding a proposed zone change that would allow developers to build up rather than out in West Hartford Center and a small portion of Elmwood. **WHL**



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The canal on the Farmington Avenue side of Reservoir 1, shown here in 1939, no longer exists.



Water over the dam

Reservoir 1 opened 150 years ago to serve Hartford

by Lynn Woike
Editor

A variety of experimental filters were tested before the water treatment facility was constructed in 1920.



MDC courtesy photos

With its industry and population growing, and pollution increasing in the Connecticut River, Hartford turned to West Hartford 150 years ago for its water supply.

West Hartford, which had split from Hartford 13 years earlier, sold land to the capital city to build a reservoir.

Hartford Water Company was founded in 1851 and the Hartford Board of Water Commissioners began the next year. In 1855, the city began pumping water from the Connecticut River to a holding pond on Garden Street, about where The Hartford is now, said James Randazzo, manager of water treatment and supply, and a history buff.

"Water was pumped right out of the river and moved up to this holding pond. It was like a big swimming pool; it wasn't very effective."

There were 150 customers and many of the original pipes were wooden. Buildings were getting taller and the river was becoming more polluted.

"Fire protection was a big deal," Randazzo said, adding, "There wasn't enough pressure coming from the hydrants. They were looking for a place that would

offer more pressure. A very tall water tower in the city was considered, but instead, the decision was to build a reservoir out on the mountain, higher than the city.

"They initially looked at Trout Brook and they also looked at the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in Granby, and they decided the best place to build their new water supply was actually right here," he said of the site on Farmington Avenue, just east of the Farmington town line. It was rich with streams and brooks and about 300 feet higher than the city, allowing for a gravity-fed water system that would also provide increased water pressure.

Construction of an earthen dam across Trout Brook began in 1864 – the year before the American Civil War ended.

"There were a lot of politics involved, because there were other property owners impacted by the damming of the water," Randazzo said. "There was a sawmill or two located downstream towards West Hartford Center. These sawmills were located on Trout Brook and used water power to run their equipment. When the dam was built, it cut off flow to these businesses and they were compensated financially by the city."

The Town of West Hartford lobbied for a benefit, and properties

along Farmington Avenue, where the pipe was laid, were allowed to connect. Later, pipes were added down Fern Street and Boulevard.

In addition to the dam, he said, a gatehouse, which contained pipes and valves used to control the flow of water, was built by a local masonry contractor named H.R. Tyron. The stone tower extends down 80 feet to the bottom of the reservoir, with only its top portion visible.

"The original dam, gatehouse and reservoir cost \$73,000 to build."

It was put into service January 2, 1867.

"The original dam lasted only eight months," Randazzo said.

Construction was partially completed on a second reservoir, now known as Reservoir 3, when flooding occurred September 6. That dam collapsed, allowing the water behind it to "flow into Reservoir 1, topping that dam, which collapsed and a big flood wave went through West Hartford. It's quite a dramatic account. Cows and chickens were getting washed down the road. This was a significant dam – 780 feet long and 53 feet high. The reservoir covered 32 acres and held 200 million gallons of water, and it was drained dry."

According to an article September 7 in The New York Times, "It had not been considered safe, was never properly built,

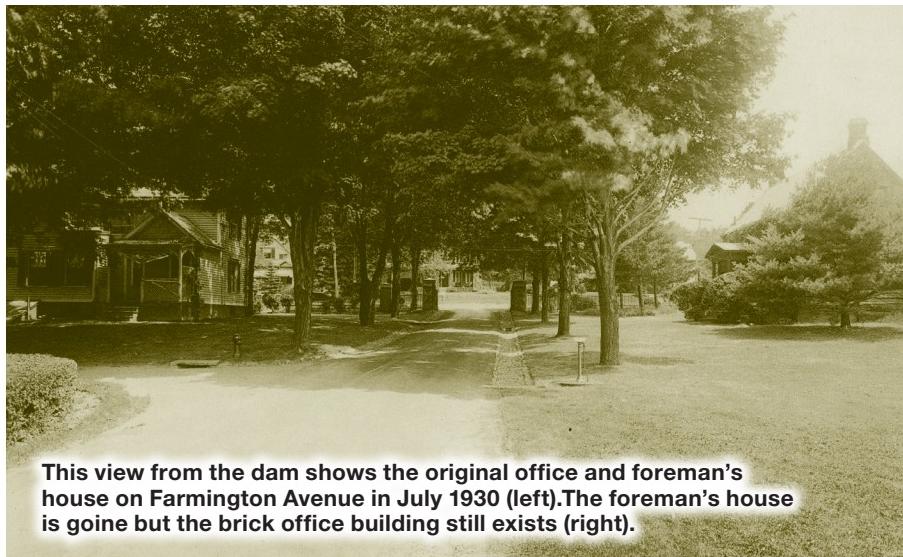
"It's quite a dramatic account. Cows and chickens were getting washed down the road. This was a significant dam – 780 feet long and 53 feet high. The reservoir covered 32 acres and held 200 million gallons of water, and it was drained dry."

-James Randazzo

and was a failure from the first – always leaking and always weak."

Hartford was forced to begin pumping from the Connecticut River again as the debate continued between those who thought the utility should be a municipal venture and those who thought it should be managed by a private company, Randazzo said.

Reservoir 1 and 2 were rebuilt by William Jarvis McAlpine, a nationally known civil engineer who was president of the American Society of Civil Engineers and was involved in the construction of



This view from the dam shows the original office and foreman's house on Farmington Avenue in July 1930 (left). The foreman's house is gone but the brick office building still exists (right).



such prominent projects as the Erie Canal, the City of Albany water works and the Brooklyn Bridge.

"That's the one we have today that's 150 years old," Randazzo said.

Reservoir 1, visible from Farmington Avenue, provided drinking water for Hartford until 1920. Now it's home to fish, and large snapping turtles and eels. Its

200 million gallons of water would be enough to supply current MDC customers for almost three days, he said.

Eventually, Hartford built four more reservoirs for a total of six that were used until 1920. More than 3,000 acres of woodlands and more than 30 miles of paved and gravel roads, and trails connect the reservoirs in town. While they

are not public parks, they are open to the public.

Behind Reservoir 1 are the second one built, now called Reservoir 3, along with Reservoirs 2 and 5. Reservoir 4 is in New Britain and Farmington – Batterson Park Pond – and Reservoir 6 is on the north side of Route 44 with the West Hartford-Bloomfield town line dividing its 800 million gallons

approximately in half.

In 1909, Hartford began looking farther from the city for a larger water supply at an even higher elevation to meet the growing demand for water from families and factories. It got permission from the State Legislature to acquire thousands of acres in the Nepaug Valley where Burlington, Canton and New Hartford meet.



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Creating the reservoir required tunneling through Avon Mountain, constructing a compensating reservoir (now known as Lake McDonough), moving two cemeteries and burying a village under water. Completed in 1916 and holding 9.5 billion gallons, that reservoir now carries 33 million gallons of water daily through eight miles of pipe to a water treatment facility at Reservoir 5, according to information on the Town of Burlington's website.

With cholera and typhoid outbreaks, Hartford looked into disinfecting its water supply, while also filtering it. Because the water came "from ponds, there could be fish, pollywogs and leaves in it, but that's what people were used to; it was better than drinking the polluted water out of the Connecticut River," Randazzo said.

It put a water treatment plant into service February 6, 1922 that filtered water from Nepaug Reservoir. While Hartford had filtered water for the last 95 years, federal regulations did not require the filtration of

drinking water until 28 years ago. Because the plant was about 50 feet higher than Reservoir 1, it provided even more water pressure and made the system's first reservoir obsolete.



This 80-foot stone tower in Reservoir 1 was built by an area mason in 1867.



A Hartford Water Works truck with wooden wheels carries supplies for the water lines.

Photos by Alicia B. Smith

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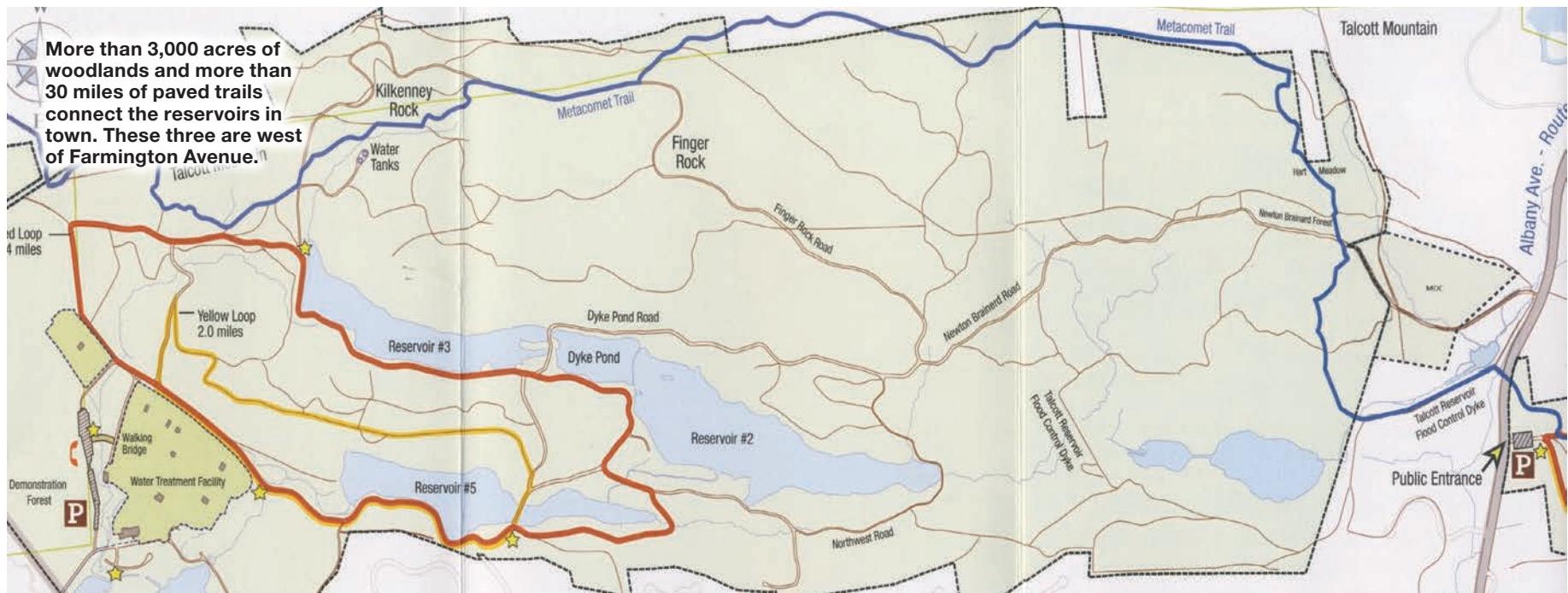
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In 1929, the General Assembly created The Metropolitan District, a public non-profit municipal corporation, to provide water and sewer systems in Greater Hartford. On July 1, 1930, it began operations by assuming responsibility for the Nepaug Reservoir as well as the six

in West Hartford. A year later, it began construction of the Barkhamsted Reservoir. Put into service in 1940, it holds 30.3 billion gallons of water.

In 1970, the MDC built a water treatment plant at Reservoir 6, with the reservoir acting as a balancing

reservoir, just as Reservoir 5 serves as a balancing reservoir for that treatment facility, with water coming from Nepaug and Barkhamsted reservoirs.

While it began with five towns, now eight belong to The Metropolitan District: Bloomfield,

East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor.

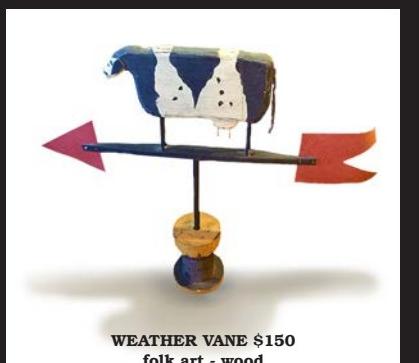
West Hartford became a member in the 1980s, turning over its water and sewer system to the MDC.

Additionally, the district provides drinking water to portions

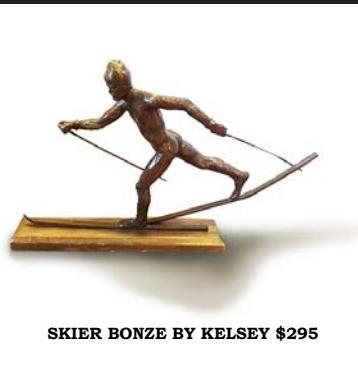
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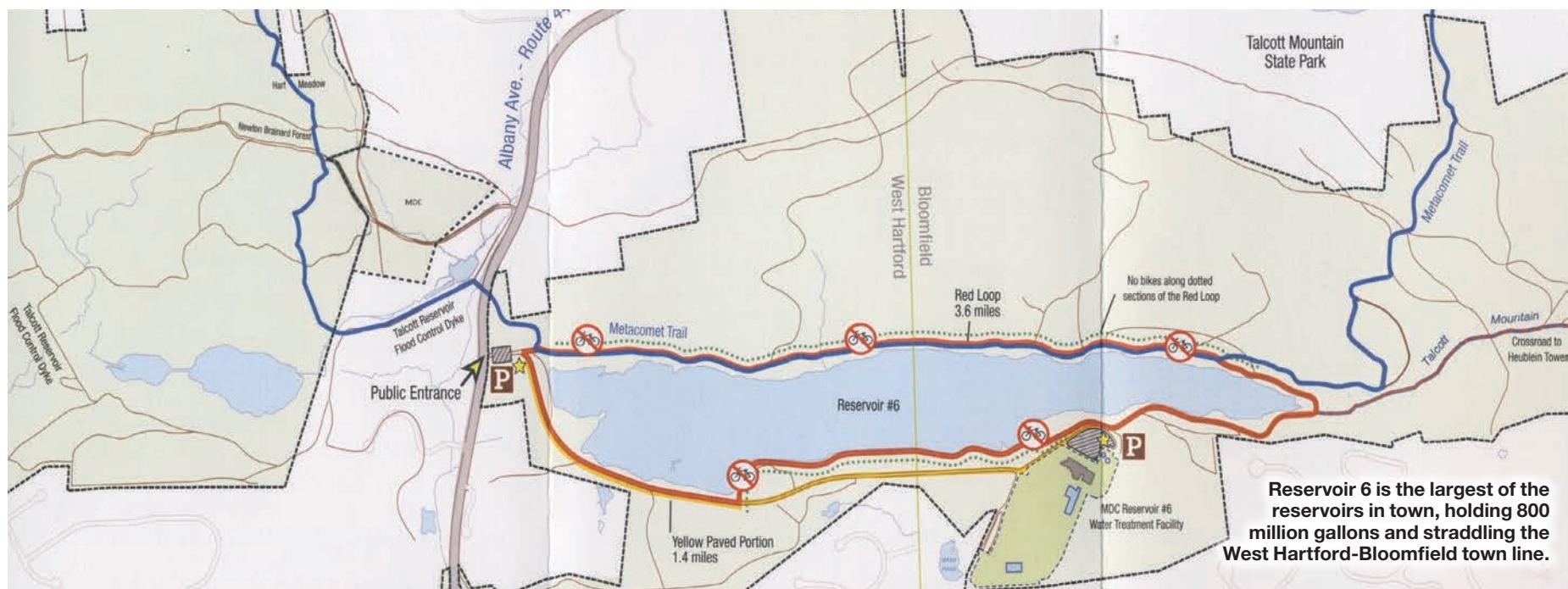
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of Farmington, Glastonbury, East Granby and South Windsor, all of which are known as non-member towns.

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Addressing the drought, Randazzo said, "We're in good shape because our reservoirs are so big. The drought we're experiencing now, over the last two years, is probably one of worst droughts in Connecticut since ... 1963-66."

The MDC responded to requests

from half a dozen other towns including New Britain and Stamford that were experiencing water shortages, and began supplying water to them, he said.

"We've been concerned. This is a historically significant

drought and we're keeping a close eye on precipitation and stream flows, but right now we're at 77 percent of our capacity, which is 77 percent of 40 billion gallons. We're not in any danger. We have enough water in storage to go close to two years [without rain]."**WHL**

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LIFE *in the classroom*



Photos by Alicia B. Smith



Museum provides muse

Elementary schools collaborate on art project

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

Color, technique and subject matter were all things that caught the attention of fifth graders at Charter Oak International Academy and their fourth grade peers across town at Bugbee Elementary School. The students at both schools have worked on a joint project after visiting the New Britain Museum of American Art together.

While there, they took a tour of the museum's collection and had an opportunity to attend a workshop to learn more about the creative process and different styles of art.

Back at their respective schools, students were asked to select something they had seen at the museum that inspired them and to create a piece of their own. As they brainstormed ideas and the materials they would need

to begin their work, the students at the two schools kept in touch via Skype and by sending videos. Their work will be part of a spring art show at their schools as well as in the town-wide art show.

Art teacher Penelope Drown at Charter Oak International Academy said she developed the idea last year and wrote a grant to fund the field trip. The funds she received from Frank Webb Bath and Lighting Center Grant enabled 140 students to enjoy the museum in January.

Part of the project was for students to have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a creative endeavor that got them thinking, seeing and interpreting like an artist.

In addition to the museum tour students, while there students also were offered one of four workshops. Each had a

special project: landscape postcards, impressionist oil pastels, artist benches and a hybrid sculpture challenge.

"I wanted to expose the kids [to art]," Drown said. "I don't think they get to go to museums often."

"What I like about this, everyone has their own different style and medium to explore further," Drown said. "They can use their creativity to create a piece of their own, they are collaborating."

Additionally, the museum's focus is on American artists, and Drown wanted to expose her students to them to counter the European artists with whom they are generally more familiar.

"When they saw 'Seal Rock' in person, it was priceless," Drown said, adding that the hanging sculpture made quite an impression, too.

During an art class at Charter Oak, art teacher Drown asked her students what motivates an artist to use a specific medium or theme. On this day, students were just beginning to think about their own projects, researching the piece that had inspired them and looking up information on the artist who had created it.

Some students busied themselves with sketching their design, all while consulting with their work partner. Others were creating a list of materials they would need.

Nelson Ortiz had selected "Pioneer in a Storm," a sculpture by Solon H. Borglum.

"The pioneer is trying to survive

by himself with no civilization," Nelson said of the piece that inspired him.

He was thinking about doing a sculpture of his own based on Borglum's piece.

Albert Bierstadt's "Seal Rock" had captivated classmate Soleil Stevens' attention.

"I like that there are animals," she said of the artwork. "I don't often see a lot of animals painted. It tells a story. The seals were fishing and a storm came and the seals took shelter on the rock. In the background there is a rock with lots and lots of seals on it."

Soleil has done some sewing when she was younger and thought she might sew a seal pillow for her project.

Londonn Williams and Jayden Lin, students at Bugbee, were inspired by the colorful work of Karl Lund.



"It was just a good learning experience for all of us. Anytime you can get kids exposed to good art it's great."

-Sydney Kenna

"I love art," she said, adding that Eric Carlisle is her favorite artist.

Landon Edwards-Scoville and Iriliz Cardona were working together. "The Arts of Life of America" by Thomas Hart Benton that depicted many activities including singing and dancing inspired them.

"First they do singing over here, it's like a village dance," Landon said of the work.

He also said he saw poverty

represented in the piece, noting several of the people in the painting were not wearing shoes and there was a lot of trash around.

Landon and Iriliz were considering creating a musical piece about the painting they had selected. Landon, who plays the saxophone, was writing the music while Iriliz was going to write the lyrics.

Josh Vazquez and David Santiago were drawn to work done by Simsbury artist Karl Lund.

During their research the two studied Lund's piece "Time Bandit."

"Me and Josh play video games and this looks like a video game," David said, adding that the two were thinking of creating a sculpture based on the artist's piece.

Josh said in other works he had seen by Lund there was a Captain America image and a World War II airplane that he thought were interesting.

Drown said she was excited to see what her students came up with for their projects.

Across town at Bugbee Elementary School students were adding the final touches to the pieces they had been working on for a couple of weeks.

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LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL

Abigail Sadsky was carefully painting the seals she had molded out of clay, clearly inspired by Albert Bierstadt's "Seal Rock."

"Clay is kind of my life," she said. "I love making things."

Abigail said she was drawn to this particular painting during her visit to the museum because the environment depicted "seemed like a really pretty place with cute seals."

During their visit to the museum, students were treated to a temporary art installation in the form of a sand sculpture. The artist spread sand in colorful patterns on the floor and later that day it was cleaned up.

The piece was around long enough for Ashton Garcia, Jacob Dylan and Sully Clancy to think it was interesting. So much so they decided to create their own version for their project. Their work would be more permanent as they intended to glue the sand they were using to a piece of cardboard.

"We liked the design," Sully said.

"We wanted to make a miniature of it," Ashton added.

Fellow student Ethan Gerst could not decide which piece from the museum's collection he liked best – the sand sculpture or the sculpture by Soo Sunny Park, so he decided to incorporate his take on both. He created a box, with one side that was open. Inside he created his take on the sand sculpture using sand with black and neon orange paint mixed in it, while a Park-like sculpture hung above it.

"I thought it was really cool how they made a sand sculpture," Ethan said.

Park's sculpture also made an impact on Dylan Hosmer and Ryan Sadowsky who were inspired to create their own similar-looking piece. Working together the two sculpted their hanging sculpture out of green and yellow malleable rubber, attaching it to cardboard and then brainstorming how they could hang it for display.

Photos by Alicia B. Smith



Megan Miller, Aya Erik-Soussi and Emelia Smith, fourth graders at Bugbee, went with a winter theme inspired by Walter Wick.



Ethan Gerst, a fourth grader at Bugbee, could not decide between the sand sculpture and the large glass sculpture by Soo Sunny Park, so he incorporated both into his original piece.

"We thought it was cool how they put it together," Ryan said of the Park piece.

Londonn Williams said he and his partner Jayden Lin were inspired by "the robot picture" – most likely referring to a piece by Lund.

"It was very creative," Londonn said. "When you go to a museum there is usually a lot of fancy art, you don't get what the artist is saying, but it's very creative. The person who made it is thinking outside the box, it's very colorful," he said of the piece.

Megan Miller, Aya Erik-Soussi and Emelia Smith were impressed with Walter Wick's snowflake work.

"It looks really real," Aya said.

The three students created their snowflake in different shades of blue.

While all the students worked to create their own pieces of art, they were also responsible for keeping a journal in which they wrote about their projects

and their creative process.

Sydney Kenna and Drown had worked together at Bugbee. When Kenna began to work at Charter Oak; she was hoping to keep a connection with the friends and students she had left behind.

Kenna said her students were excited to visit the museum and that many had never been to an art museum before. Some even wrote notes thanking her for the experience.

"Their imaginations are not copies," Kenna said of the work her students were doing. She said she was pleased with how her students truly were inspired by the works they had seen and how they interpreted their own pieces and used different media to create them.

"It was just a good learning experience for all of us," Kenna said. "Anytime you can get kids exposed to good art it's great." **WHL**

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LIFE
getting to know you

Probate judge Owen Eagan

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

This past November, Owen P. Eagan was elected West Hartford's probate judge.

He grew up in West Hartford, attending St. Timothy Middle School and Northwest Catholic High School. He majored in English at Wesleyan University and earned a law degree from Georgetown University. He returned here, married and raised three children.

Initially, he worked for a small

law firm before opening one of his own on Farmington Avenue. He later teamed up with attorney Tom Donahue and the two opened a joint general law practice on Arapahoe Road.

"General practice of law was a great experience because you learn all those aspects of law and you deal with all kinds of people from all walks of life," Eagan said.

He served on the town planning and zoning commission for two years and was then a town



Photo by Alicia B. Smith



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council member, eventually becoming deputy mayor.

The position of probate judge is part time, and he is only the third person to serve in that capacity.

West Hartford LIFE sat down with Eagan to learn more about him and his new job.

Q: What does a probate judge do?

A: A probate judge is a creature of statute and can only do what the legislature allows the judge to do. The probate judge handles, as many people would guess, the administration of an estate when someone dies. They also do will contest which is something I think people generally think the probate court does. But the probate court does much more than that. The probate court deals with appointments of conservators. ... A probate judge determines whether in fact in an involuntary situation a person needs a conservator to handle both their financial affairs and their personal affairs. ... Probate court appoints guardians, the probate court deals with power of attorney, probate court deals with commitment hearings, and those unable to handle life's issues and need to be committed. Probate court also

"You are probably more apt to be in a probate court than you are in any other court."

-Judge Owen Eagan

deals with name changes, so you might have a person who simply wants their name changed for personal reasons, it could be somebody who has changed their gender and needs to have their name changed.

Probate court deals with adoptions. In fact I just did an adoption of a young boy, he's become part of a family of four children, he was the fifth. It was the best part of my day, the best part of my week.

The probate judge also manages the office [with] a staff of eight.

... The probate judge has to understand trial – because we deal with rules of evidence during hearings – and has to understand settlement practices because you are dealing with that. You have to understand real estate and real estate transactions because you are dealing with all kinds assets, real estate, stocks and bonds, and so forth.

You are probably more apt to

be in a probate court than you are in any other court. If you are arrested you may end up in court. If you have civil dispute over money or over property, you may be in superior court, but at some point you are going to be in probate court, whether it's an adoption or your will is filed in probate court, whether it's a name change or loved one has to have a conservator appointed.

Q: What made you decide to run for probate judge?

A: I saw the opportunity as a chance to grow and develop my skills as a lawyer and contribute to the town. It's been wonderful. I love it. I have practiced in the probate area for the past 30 years and felt like I knew a lot going in ... [but] I have leaned that I have a lot to learn. I have been doing a lot of work on my own with training and

reading the statutes. It's a labor of love. I have really enjoyed it. It's like going back to college, a great class that you love.

Q: Did you get training for this type of work?

A: Once I was elected, the probate court requires that we do 40 hours of training ... at the probate administration office in Newington. They also have you do self-training at home. A lot of things online are at our fingertips – there is an abundance of material.

Q: How did you get into this line of work?

A: My dad [F. Owen Eagan] is a lawyer. He is a retired United States magistrate judge. I'd have to say he was the greatest influence on me. My father is, if you've read the book "To Kill a Mockingbird," he is truly an Atticus Finch. He is just that kind of a man. He loves people, he loves the law. I think that is one of his greatest loves besides his family. He loves the law. The greatest part of it is helping people. He is extremely kind.

There were people who would come into his courtroom in chains and he would always have the



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chains removed, he would talk to them like they were human beings. He would say that they had been spun around, they might have done something terrible but they haven't been convicted, they are innocent until proven guilty and he would give them an opportunity to call home. ... He cared about people. He cared about helping people. He always said it's a great job, you'll never get rich but you'll make a good living. It is one of the most rewarding things that you can do; we have an obligation to contribute and to give back. He was the perfect example.

Q: What is an average day like for you?

A: I'm up at 5. I try to exercise every day. I get ready for the day; I sit down and go through my calendar at home. I read; it could be cases, it could be a file I brought home to get ready for the day. Then I come into this office here at 24 Arapahoe, look at what's on the computer, return

calls, work on various files. I see clients. Then I go to the probate court. It could be in the morning. I do hearings. It could be in the afternoon, depending on how I've scheduled it. Then I prepare for my hearings at the probate court, I read the files, I read the clerk's summary of the files, and I do the hearings and come back. The court has had at least a bucket of files, it's almost like a milk carton, and an expanded milk carton so I end up signing documents, either orders I've previously issued or whatever. I am issuing orders. Then I might take a file home and then come back to the office. Return more calls. I might see a client here towards the end of the day. It's usually about a 12-hour day. I am home after that and I eat dinner, then I might read a little bit more, watch the news with my wife and then go to bed. That's about it. It's a busy day.

Q: What is the most challenging part of your job?

A: I think balancing my family life and my career. As you can see, those days are full and my family life is very important to me, my spiritual life is very important to me. That balancing act is difficult, but ... I am able to do it.

Q: If you weren't doing this what would you be doing?

A: I think I would be running a business; I am not sure what business. I really enjoy running a business, it's something I do here as part of this firm and something I do over at the probate court. I think I'd like sales. I think that is something I would be good at. But I also feel very creative. I like art, I like design, I like architecture. So I don't know how I would blend all of those things.

Q: What do you love about your job as a probate judge?

A: It's being with people. Helping them with pretty serious issues, pretty sensitive issues, family issues. I really relate to families and people.

Q: What do people think you do and how is that different from what you actually do?

A: I think they think you do administration of estates when someone dies, helping to distribute assets to their loved ones or whomever they have designated in a will or if they haven't done a will, then by the laws and statutes. I think they think probate judges deal with will contests. When people come in and say "I have a different will" or "I am entitled to something." But what probate judges do is what we talked about; they handle guardianships, commitment hearings, appointments of conservators, those matters, adoptions, and name changes. I think people are surprised to learn when you tell them you do that wide variety of things.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I've done some painting. I took a course over here with Paul Batch, which I loved. I like woodworking. ... I like working around the house.



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I do like working with my hands. I like being creative.

Q: What is the best vacation you've ever taken?

A: Any vacation with my family has been great but the one that comes to mind, we went to Savannah, Georgia. There was so much there. It just was a wonderful time, they've got SCAD, Savannah College of Art and Design; it's a creative college, which interested me. SCAD helped revive the city and they went and certain historic buildings, which were probably going to be torn down. They took them over and made them part of the school. There is all kinds of art, there is an interesting vibe there. There are young and old, different people there. I think it's just really cool. My kids loved it, there was something for everyone.

We spend time at Old Lyme shores in Connecticut. My great grandparents had had a place down there in Sound View and then

moved to Old Lyme, so that is a really special place. All my siblings go down there, my parents would be down there and we'd all be together. It's a throwback 50 years, it's very old fashioned, very calm. Not a lot of big waves, but a lot of history and a lot of beach and boats. I like boating. We water ski and tube and do things like that.

It's with the family that is where I am happiest.

Q: What is the last book you read?

A: "Unbroken." I really loved that book. The character was courageous, inspirational. He was a runner and my son ... [is] an incredible runner. ... Runners are really interesting people. They are incredible, they are driven. I really liked that aspect of it and I liked the fact that the main character was real; he had problems with alcohol and he really struggled. ... There was a lot of gray area. There is a lot of gray area in probate court. **WHL**

**Keeping it in the family,
Judge Owen Eagan was sworn
in as the West Hartford
Probate Judge in November
by his father, U.S. Magistrate
Judge F. Owen Eagan.**



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Senior pets add spice

My husband and I moved to Cromwell in September 2014, bringing with us the last member of our cat family. We sent our boy, Luke, to the Rainbow Bridge that January and spent the next year without a pet in our household.

Your brain can make all the logical arguments it wants about keeping retirement life simple, but when you've had at least one cat in your home for almost 40 years, your heart has a mind of its own.

About a year ago, I began to consider adoption, but I didn't want to start over with kittens that might be

left without a home if they outlived me. I spent many hours on the Internet looking at cats whose aging owners had either died or been forced to give them up. More often than not, these felines are seniors themselves, making them difficult to place.

Since I wanted two cats again, I chose an organization that had several seniors awaiting placement. It's the Protectors of Animals in East Hartford.

We adopted 10-year-old Kallie through POA in March 2016. She's a calico and tortoise combination, quiet and gentle. In April we added 7-year-old Stella—not quite a senior, but get-

ting on in years. She's a torbie—a tiger and calico combination. Stella is a talker and she's as energetic as Kallie is calm. She has turned out to be quite a character. I was told to avoid giving her catnip because it gets her "over-stimulated."

It wasn't the catnip; it's just Stella.

Soon after we brought Stella home, we discovered that she enjoys "hunting" throughout the night. She goes to the end of the loft area where my bear collection is displayed in wooden crates. One by one she selects her prey and carries it in her mouth down the stairs from the loft. All the while, she emits her strange hunting meow. She deposits each animal, usually at the foot of the stairs. Then, she goes back up to stalk another one.

In the morning, I pick up the bodies and put them back in their display. It's not all bad: I get good exercise from the two or three trips that it takes to bring them back to the loft.

In an effort to preserve my own collection, I bought Stella several small stuffed animals—without catnip in them. She now has over a dozen critters. In addition to the predictable

mice and rabbits, there's a cheetah, a duck, two sheep, a skunk, two bears of her own and a turquoise fish with spongy spines. I had hoped she'd leave my bears alone. Fat chance. One morning there were fourteen stuffies scattered about. Six of them were Stella's; the rest were mine. I've actually had to mend the limbs on several of her prey.

Stella has taught her sister how to hunt. A reminder that Kallie was the quiet one—virtually silent.

The two of them are so adorable, it's impossible to be upset with any of this. If my bears are still fair game, so what? The pleasure that these senior cats are bringing to their senior parents is worth every slobbered up stuffie that we step on barefoot in the morning. **WHL**

*Elaine M. Decker's books—*Retirement Sparks Redux, Retirement Sparks Again, Retirement Sparks and CANCER: A Coping Guide*—are on Amazon.com, including Kindle editions. One of her essays appears in the anthology: *70 Things To Do When You Turn 70*. Contact her at: emdecker@ix.netcom.com.*



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Something to crow about

Alan Friedman balances music, finance

by Mara Dresner

Staff Writer

Alan Friedman's life changed watching "The Ed Sullivan Show" in February 1964.

"That's when I became grossly interested and involved in music. I was 8 years old when The Beatles were on Ed Sullivan. That was a seismic change in our pop culture. There has never been an artist that has altered pop culture and music like The Beatles; no one has done what they did," Friedman said, noting that many musicians owe their start to The Beatles appearing on the show. "These four mop top guys show up. They looked really dapper. What made them amazing was two things. Number one was their ability to understand chord structure and harmony in the songs they wrote. It really was unmatched at that time. It was new; it was fresh; it was innovative. And, because they were young, good-looking lads, they attracted screaming females to the audience,

"Creating something new that actually is challenging to play and lyrically makes a statement, but doing all that with good friends, that's really the most joyful part."
- Alan Friedman

and a pop explosion happened almost overnight. No one in the States knew about them until they were on Ed Sullivan. You have an impressionable young boy watching a theater full of screaming girls, it had a profound affect. There were a lot of males going, 'That's what I want to do.'

Friedman convinced his parents to buy him a guitar.

"I started dabbling in guitar. It wasn't until I hit age 12 that I started to take playing a bit more seriously," he said.

He was greatly influenced by the British Invasion bands as well as U.S. groups, including the Rolling Stones, Jethro Tull, Led Zeppelin, The Who, The Moody Blues, The Monkees, The Dave Clark Five and The Beach Boys.

It wasn't long before he was performing in a band in the Albany area where he grew up.

"We really started playing a lot," he said. "I never took lessons. Everything I know is either from music theory classes in school or really from listening to records. For me it was all listening to records; it was all done by ear. I didn't realize it at the time, but a lot of us were doing the same thing, just listening and learning how to play stuff on our own."

One of his first bands was called Riders on the Storm, named after The Doors' song. He remembers doing their first gig – at the keyboard player's church.

"I was the token Jewish guitar player. There was a Blind Faith song, that's where Eric Clapton went after Cream, called 'Presence of the Lord,'" he remembered with a chuckle.

He was also in a high school band, Highway Star, named for the



CPA Alan Friedman is also a musician with The Accounting Crows. He's holding a MusicMan "Luke" guitar, endorsed by his all-time personal favorite guitar player, Steve Lukather, whose nickname is "Luke."

Deep Purple song.

Friedman had a number of early influences.

"Seeing George Harrison and John Lennon play; we had guitar heroes. There were hundreds of guitar heroes, from Jimi Hendrix to Jeff Beck to Jimmy Page. There aren't any guitar heroes these days," he said.

He loved music so much, he thought he might make it a career "for a fleeting moment." His parents had other ideas.

"My parents convinced me since I had a liking for accounting, they suggested I go to college. They felt education was the most important thing, and at the age of 18, I was OK with that. I figured I'd always keep music as an integral part of my life, which I did," he said. "My dad was a

CPA in Albany, New York, and had his own sole proprietorship, so I'd been around it my whole life. And I took a bookkeeping class in high school and had a great teacher and became really interested in it."

Friedman came to Connecticut in 1974 to attend the University of Hartford, graduating in 1978.

"I've stuck around ever since," he said.

During college he played with a band called Storm, whose tag line was "All Weather Rock." He majored in accounting with a minor in computers, which he put to good use at United Technologies Corporation, as an information technology systems analyst, doing computer software programming of accounting applications.

Courtesy photo

Alan Friedman's new CD is called "B-Sides, Basement Tapes & Randumb Tunes." It's a compilation of songs leftover from his previous recordings.

He went on to earn a master's in professional accounting, also from University of Hartford, working as a management consultant with Ernst & Whinney, then CFO of Continent Investor Services Corp. before becoming one of the two founding partners of the CPA firm Friedman, Kannenberg & Company P.C. in Farmington in 1985, where he is a senior partner.

As his career progressed, his ability to play in a band took a hit.

"When I got out of college, I would do gigs for a year or so. It was getting in the way of two things. I was studying for the CPA exam and I got married a year out of college, so I took on different responsibilities. I gave up the band for my career," said Friedman, who lives in West Hartford with his wife Beth; they have three children and two grandchildren.

However, that didn't mean his musical life was over. Instead of playing out, he began recording music.

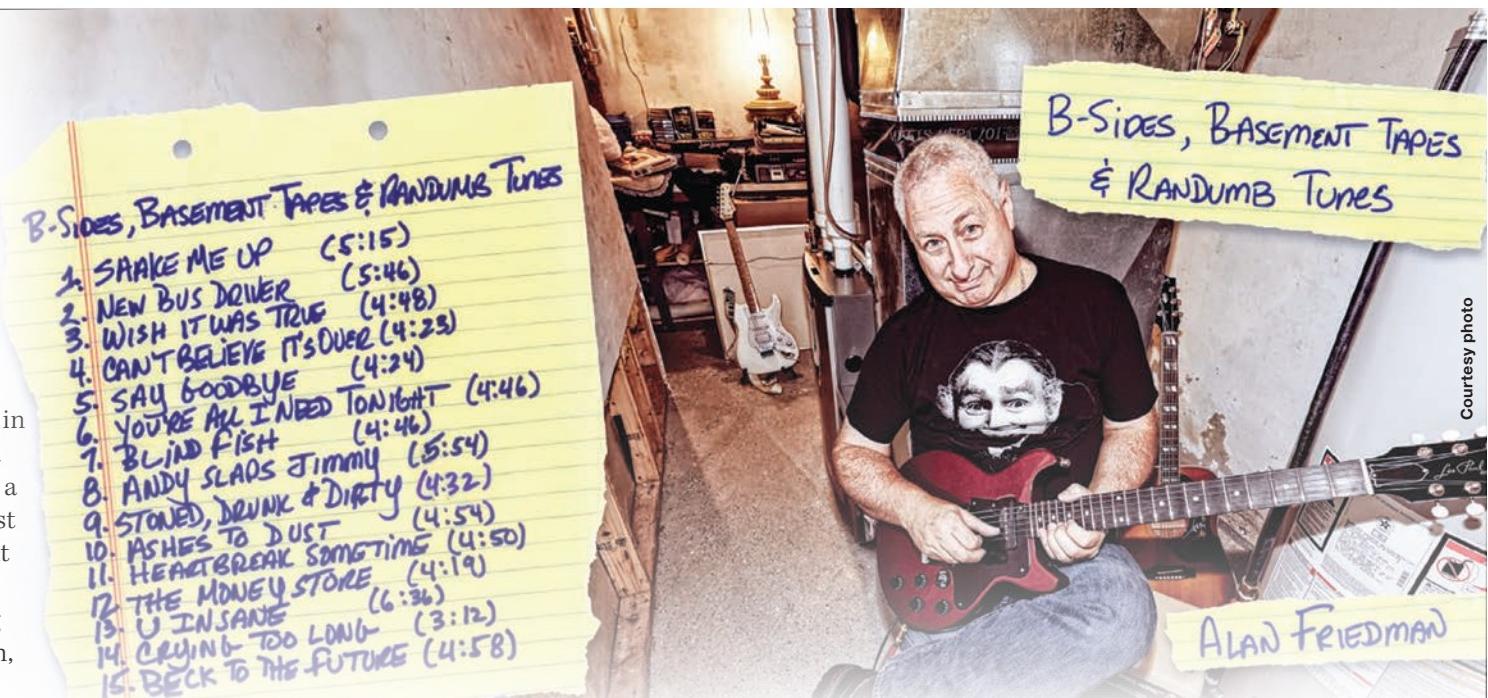
"I thought, 'Here's something as fun.' It was the early '80s. Technology was changing. I could actually afford to get a multitrack recorder and write music and record music. I started doing that in the early to mid-'80s, and that became my thing for 30-plus years." Friedman just finished his fifth record. The first one took the longest, seven or eight years to complete, and was released in 2002. Now, they come a bit faster.

"I knock off a record every two or three years," he said.

His music is available online on iTunes and CDBaby.

"They're a pretty wide variety; mostly rock, pop funk, R and B, blues and ballads. There's some country in there, some folk."

He's recruited some heavy hitters to join him in the studio, including Jonathan Mover (Satriani, GTR, Tubes), Bobby Kimball (Toto), Doug Wimbish (Living Colour), Greg Phillinganes (Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder), Bernard Fowler (Rolling Stones) – and his own sons.



Courtesy photo

He usually writes the music first and then the lyrics. His songs are about one of three things.

"Social issues; or they tend to be about love and heartbreak; then the third one is something ridiculously funny," he said, such as his song "Too Much Drama Mama." "It's about a guy who buys way too many guitars and gets too much grief from his wife."

His most recent recording is "B-Sides, Basement Tapes & Randumb Tunes."

"I'd done all these records and I had leftover songs. After you write and record a bunch of songs, you have leftover ones that you didn't think fit the record. After doing the records preceding this, I wound up with all these leftover tunes, so I compiled the best of them," he explained.

He's thinking of having a release party, his first, sometime in 2017.

Friedman is a featured writer for Music, Inc., Drumhead and International Musician magazines, and serves as a core panelist of The Sessions, an organization that promotes music education across the U.S. His accounting firm has a number of clients in the world of music, from members of the Rolling Stones organization to the band Living Colour to symphony conductors.

Friedman is also a founding member of The Accounting Crows, which started in 1997. He was approached by his friend Mark Zampino, public affairs director for the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants.

"He was putting on a career day for graduating high school students contemplating collegiate paths in

accounting. He thought it would be a great idea to have a group of CPAs to play a couple of songs, to show how cool it is to be a CPA and dispel the stereotype that accountants are boring, anal-retentive math guys who have no personality. We did this performance and it came off great, so we said, 'Why don't we form this band?' Friedman recalled.

The band has performed extensively, both locally and nationally, from Blue Back Square to San Diego, Boston, Phoenix and Tampa. For many years, the band celebrated the end of tax season with a charity fundraiser at Murphy & Scarletti's in Farmington.

"I thought it would have its attraction for a couple of corporate events. We were doing it just for the fun of playing music. We certainly weren't doing this for the money," he noted.

"First of all, Alan is solid, and by that I mean I can always count on him for anything, especially bad jokes," Zampino said. "He and I are soul brothers in that we truly connect on every level, and I know that probably everyone he knows probably feels the same way about Alan. He's probably one of the most generous people I know, whether it's sharing his knowledge, his talent, his insights – or his sandwich. He is one of the most empathetic and kind persons I know. He is also the eternal optimist, and his can-do spirit is virtually unmatched and a true asset to all."

"As for his musical capabilities, Alan is a major talent, a master plank-spanker and a true professional. He brings a true musicality to our act and I am always proud to share the stage with him, and flattered that

he includes me on his CD projects."

The two room together when the Crows are on the road.

"Alan's always my roomie. He's a great travel partner – flexible and fun. When we fly, he brings his computer loaded with movies, not one but two sets of headphones, and a jumbo bag of Twizzlers and we watch movies en route to wherever," Zampino said.

That camaraderie is what Friedman enjoys most with his music.

"While I love having an end product of a CD, to me the joy of doing it is not in the end product, it's in the journey. I love getting 20 to 30 really talented musician friends of mine and get to hang with them for an afternoon and recording their parts. That's the fun," he said.

During tax season, he doesn't have time to focus on his music, he said he spends eight to 10 hours a week on it the rest of the year.

"The fun part about playing out, especially with The Accounting Crows, is we get to play the fun places with all the classic rock and roll that most people want to hear," he said.

He's looking forward to making his next album.

"Creating something new that actually is challenging to play and lyrically makes a statement, but doing all that with good friends, that's really the most joyful part," he said. "I love writing and recording it all, but the most joyful part is doing it with other talented friends. There's always silliness and laughs. When you're bringing other people into the process, it invariably comes out differently and hopefully better than you what would have done on your own." **WHL**



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Allison Sharlow
allison.sharlow@raveis.com



Kate Wells
kate.wells@raveis.com

Where to FIND IT



Feed those birds

A whimsical way to feed the birds can be found in these seed varieties that come in cylinders or fun animal figures. The birds can enjoy mixtures of bugs, nuts and berries, safflower or even some hot pepper suet. The shop also carries specially designed feeders to hold the cylinders of seeds that any feathered friend would be happy to try. Find this assortment of seeds at Wild Birds Unlimited, 320 West Main Street, Suite 5, Avon. For more information call 860-677-0181 or visit avon.wbu.com.



Doggie Treats

Fido is ready to be spoiled and there are several options to do just that. Among them is an Up Country plaid collar with an Up Country jacket to keep your four-legged friend warm. Other ways to spoil your pooch include treats from Dogs Love Kale, or keep them busy with a Can Toy. When the day is done they might like to feast with the Waggo Dipper Bowl. All of these items can be found at Dogology, 5 Sedgwick Road. For more information call 860-904-7260 or visit dogologyct.com

Home Sweet Home

Any bird would be lucky to spend the night in this unusual birdhouse made from an old coffee pot. This unique birdhouse, along with an assortment of other bird-related items, can be found at Ava Grace Gifts, in the lower level of the Simsbury Town Shops, 926 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury. For more information call 860-658-4400.



Babies on the go

The UPPAbaby Vista stroller is any parents dream for bringing around the kids. For the children, it just may be the Cadillac of carting. This stroller is meant to grow as the first child ages and another one comes along. There are several accessories that allow families to use the stroller at just about any age, from an infant car seat attachment to a bassinet to a two-seater option. Any seating configuration can face out or towards the parent pushing the stroller. The certified for sleeping bassinet feature also has a stand available for purchase so it can be used with the stroller or on its own. The stroller is available at the Toy Chest and Little Folks Furniture, 975 Farmington Avenue. For more information call 860-233-5559 or visit toycestwh.com. **WHL**



Slice of LIFE

Courtesy photos



1



2



4



3



5

Children's Charity Ball

1. The planning committee for the Children's Charity Ball spent month's organizing the annual event, held in January. **2.** Judy Bierly, who retired from The Bridge Family Center in June of last year after more than 20 years as its director of community services, was recognized during the ball for coordinating the annual event for 18 years. Bierly was also given the Bridge's annual "Build No Fences" award last September. **3.** Representatives of Allstate Insurance Company posed for a photo while enjoying the event. Allstate was the evening's presenting sponsor. **4.** Flowering table decorations and pink hues brought sparkle to the event, held at the Hartford Golf Club. **5.** Mary and Bob Carangelo were in attendance at the event, which drew hundreds to the Golf Club on a cold, January evening.

The Bridge Family Center

1022 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, CT

wishes to thank the following donors to our 18th annual gala, the  Children's Charity Ball

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A place of welcome

Library puts increased focus on community engagement as it looks strategically to the future

by Abigail Albair
Executive Editor

While for many a library is a place of reference and research, for others, like Pramod Pradhan, it can be a place to help you put down roots.

As an immigrant from Nepal, Pradhan understands firsthand the experience of learning to engage with a new community in a new nation.

Along with his skillset and background in technology – complete with more than a decade of library work – his experiences made him a natural fit for the new role of community engagement librarian in West Hartford.

“He’s a West Hartford resident who lives in Elmwood, so this was just perfect,” Library Executive Director Martha Church said. “He knows what it’s like when you come to a new country and, sometimes, the library is where you get your first foothold and learn how to make your way in this new world.”

Pradhan was hired to the new position last fall. Since 2005, he held a variety of roles in the Hartford library, including assistant at the Barbour

Branch, community librarian and manager of the Mark Twain Branch, public service support specialist and digital programming specialist.

“I couldn’t be more excited,” Church said about having Pradhan take on the community engagement role. “He can say [to immigrants] ‘I’ve been there, I’ve done that, this is where you start.’”

Pradhan speaks five languages and holds an advanced certificate in computer information technology.

“West Hartford is so diverse and we’ve got so many newcomers to our community, many of them coming from parts of the world where a public library doesn’t necessarily function and behave the way public libraries in the United States do,” Church said. “The ability to make contacts with these people, to show them the wide variety of resources we have available both here and remotely through our website with your library card, that is so important.”

As part of his new role, Pradhan works on adult programming for the three branches of the library and works as a digital programmer on the

library’s program team.

Reaching out to community members is of the utmost importance to him because of his personal experiences, he said.

Pradhan moved to the United States in 2004 with his wife and son, who was 10 years old at the time. They first moved to Colchester and lived with a host family as they navigated the process of securing employment, housing and enrolling their son in school.

“We had a wonderful family open their doors to us and help us,” he said. “A lot of folks are not fortunate to have those kinds of families, they are by themselves looking for all kinds of resources. The library is the place where, if we don’t have the information here, we know where to look for it.”

Pradhan recently met with a refugee family from Egypt. Speaking with the mother, father and three children brought back memories for him.

“The mother had a lot of questions, as all mothers always have a lot of questions, that’s universal,” he said with a laugh. “It took me back to when we first came here. It was the same



Pramod Pradhan is the community engagement librarian, a new position

questions we had. Will my son be comfortable in school? Will he be bullied? Will he be able to speak to his teacher? Will he be able to speak English? We think about bigger things like jobs, but we think about will he be OK in school and all these little things.”

The library has a welcome center that features books in a variety of languages, but Pradhan hopes to also launch a citizenship corner complete with citizenship forms and information about English as a Second Language classes and other offerings.

He is also the administrative liaison for the town to the Human Rights Commission and, with that group, is working to help ease the transition for immigrants.

“One project I’ve been trying to bring is a welcome packet where a new immigrant can come and get the details on different town departments, how to register their kids for school or get vaccines, where to look for jobs, get a drivers license,” he said. “That kind of thing I don’t think exists so I’m trying to get that all together and it should be available at different

places including the library."

Many immigrants are surprised that the resources at the library are free, he said.

"At home, we're used to having to pay for everything. When you say everything in the library is free, that's great," he said.

During his time in Hartford, Pradhan worked closely with the Somali community in the city, as well as people from Bhutan.

In West Hartford, he's become familiar with the Vietnamese, Portuguese and Chinese communities, among others.

When he first came to town, he estimates there were 50 people from Nepal here.

"Now there are over 800," he said. "I think the biggest Nepalese community in Connecticut is in West Hartford."

In his new role he hopes to bring these cultural groups together as one West Hartford community.

"I want to see all these communities coming together as a whole, including not only immigrants and refugees, but everyone coming together and I think the library is the place where that can happen," he said. "The library can be an open place where they can express their views and get the help that they want to have. A lot of folks don't know what the library does besides books. ... We have enormous resources and also such an amazing staffing network. The West Hartford [library] staff has an immense knowledge and a willingness to help people of any origin."

'Reaching out and pulling in'

Although, Church noted, "Library work is community engagement work across the board," Pradhan's position was created for the specific task of meeting with business associations, neighborhood associations, groups such as the Regents and Squires, and other residents to increase outreach.

Concurrently, the library asked children's specialist Jane Breen to put an increased focus on working with children in the public school system.

"We've always done outreach to the nursery schools, but we wanted to bring it to all the public schools and help children learn [libraries] don't only exist while you're in school, but are something that allows programs and the borrowing of books and all the wonderful things that a library does for the rest of your life."

Breen regularly visits elementary

school classrooms, including hosting a Lunch Bunch book discussion group with third-grade students, and otherwise works to foster the love of the library among the town's youngest residents.

This increased focus for the library on community engagement is representative of a larger shift for the institution in priorities for serving the public.

The library's strategic plan for 2017-22, which was released at the end of 2016, highlights engaging the community as an important area of focus, along with enhancing access to information, maximizing physical and virtual space and practicing good stewardship.

The plan begins with the simple mission. "Welcoming all, the West Hartford Public Library brings people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and strengthen our diverse community."

The vision outlined in the plan speaks to the fact that libraries have evolved dramatically over the years to no longer be places of the written word only, but places that distribute information in a multitude of ways to a multitude of ends.

All people in West Hartford will have the opportunity to use the Public Library to empower themselves to reach their potential, to pursue life-long learning, and to access ideas and information freely in order to enrich the cultural, social and economic vitality of our town."

Values of the library include inspiring patrons to discover their talents and to foster collaboration; providing professional service; strengthening the diverse community by promoting literacy; serving as a welcoming center for free and equal access to information and building community connections; and exploring and embracing new technologies to assist patrons in learning the skills to use them.

To support the strategic planning process, the library compiled a community profile, analyzing and comparing town and library demographics, statistics and trends.

"Getting a clear picture of which segments of the community are using the library – and which are not – was important information for our planning process," the plan reads. "Ethnic diversity is something that makes West Hartford unique in Connecticut; the library already has serves for the foreign-born population and sees

opportunities to work with this community more fully. Residents across all socioeconomic groups value early childhood literacy, and take advantage of all the library programs offered for children."

In crafting the strategic plan, the library conducted a survey last summer to gather resident feedback. A total of 1,832 survey responses were received.

Frequently addressed topics included library hours of operation, the need for free and convenient parking and the elimination of restrictions on the number of items that may be reserved by library users through the electronic catalog.

The diversity of the community was reflected in the preferred languages for materials and programs. In addition to English, some of the languages preferred which are top languages other than English spoken at home by West Hartford Public School students were Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, Portuguese, Vietnamese and Nepali. Other languages preferred included French and Italian – which ranked third and fourth overall, respectively, behind English and Spanish – as well as Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, Polish, German, Hindi, Hebrew, Farsi, Japanese, Greek and American Sign Language.

In addition to reaching residents of all cultural backgrounds, Church hopes the library will begin to reach residents of different trades.

"If you're a business owner, we've got tools that allow you to help build your marketing plan," Church said as an example of non-traditional library uses with which residents may not be familiar. "We want to be more visible. We want people to understand that we have a lot of very beneficial [resources] and we're a great place to come."

Since Church began at the library in the 1970s, she's seen many changes, including the rise of the Internet, taking the library's system from six Internet computers to 18 in the lab at the Noah Webster Library and an additional 10 at both the Faxon and Bishops Corner branches, along with computers in the children's department and laptops that can be made available for patron use.

Programs have changed dramatically, from simple book discussions to cooking demonstrations and programs on music and meditation.

"Discussion groups are much bigger for us," she said. "We have a Shakespeare group, a weekly New

By the numbers

- The library has 239,526 items in its collections. Of that, 201,551 are books, with 61,411 of those for children. The books per capita of the library is 3.8 – well above the national average of 2.5.
- Last year, 472,554 people visited the library, with 7.5 visits per capita. The national average is 4.6 visits per capita.
- A total of 83,467 reference questions were asked and 30,058 people attended programs.
- Ninety-five computers were used 56,871 times.
- More than 700,000 items were borrowed, including more than 496,000 books for an average of 11.6 borrowed items per person, above the national average of 7.5 per person.
- The operating income of the library was \$3,306,489, for a total cost per resident of only \$52.44.
- The library has approximately 23,257 cardholders, representing 37 percent of the town's population.
- Overall, seniors and families with children use the library more than other groups, while a segment of lower-income residents rely on the library for literacy and Internet access needs.
- Seventeen percent of residents – more than 10,000 individuals – identify as foreign-born.

Yorker discussion group that draws between 10 and 20 people a week and English language [learning] conversation groups."

The library implemented an "Author's Shelf" to celebrate local authors and is hosting its first "How-To" festival March 25 to foster interest and learning in a variety of topics.

"It's a shift in our focus," she said. "Roughly the same number of people visit us, roughly the same number of books get checked out; it ebbs and flows. But our offerings are more diverse. It's that idea of reaching out and pulling in."

Church has always loved the library and seen it as a kind of home, and her hope is that the community will increasingly see it in that light as well.

"People see us as a safe and neutral place to come and that's valuable to us, we like to be seen that way," she said. "It comes down to the people, the staff and the patrons, and you can't measure those completely by the numbers. That's why we're here." **WHL**



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Get Cozy



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Get Cozy

A cozy home

Design tips that bring comfort on chilly days

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Chuckles, Connecticut's answer to Punxsutawney Phil, may be predicting an early spring, but that doesn't mean there aren't still plenty of chilly days and even colder nights ahead. Since home is not only where the heart is, but also where most of us hunker down when the calendar turns from merry and bright to dreary and dank, we asked design experts for their best tips, big and small, to make your favorite rooms cozier.

Use the walls

Liz Goldberg of Goldberg Design LLC in Glastonbury said that comfort is all around you.

"One thing that I think makes a family or living room cozier is upholstered walls. I've used them in many areas. It not only looks amazing with all of the beautiful fabrics available, but, functionally, it helps with noise reverberation and you know how cozy a room feels when you can sit and have a nice conversation or hear the music playing softly," she said. "When you're in a room and you can sit next to someone and have a nice quiet conversation, that makes it feel more intimate, and cozy to me is intimate."

Goldberg said there are numerous techniques and fabrics to choose, including cotton, vinyl and leather looks. In addition to changing the feel of a room, it can serve a practical purpose as well.

"It's a great method if you bought an older home or a condo and there's

old-fashioned paneling. You put this over the wall and it hides a multitude of sins," she said.

It is a job that's best left to the professionals.

"You have to know what you're doing or it can get messy looking," Goldberg noted.

She said that some clients pick one wall to feature, while others decide to use fabric on all their walls.

"It's a similar feeling as when there's a bare window and then you put a drape on the window. It softens the effect and gives you an opportunity to introduce color and texture in the room on another surface you might not have thought of. It can really transform a space," she said.

Accent with a personal touch

Heather Grahling, owner of Vivid Hue Home, a gift and home decor boutique in Farmington, believes that adding accents that are meaningful to you will help make any room feel warm and welcoming.

A side table

suddenly becomes more alluring with a special vase filled with blooms. Place treasures found during family travels on top of a coffee table and add layers with stacks of personal interest books. These personal accessories not only provide a cozy touch, they will add layers to your room that will ultimately result in a homier feel."



Get Cozy

Grahling said.

She puts this into practice in her own home.

"One of my favorite coffee table accents is a brass lobster that I found while thrifting on vacation in Kennebunkport. I bought the lobster for a steal and set it on top of design books on my coffee table. It reminds me of my summer at the beach and also adds a nice conversation piece when guests ask about it," she said.

She also uses photos to add a special feel.

"In today's age of social media, most of my family photos are on my phone or Facebook. A few years ago, I started selecting my favorite digital photos and creating a printed flip book. There are many inexpensive apps that make this task very easy," she noted. "Now, in addition to my favorite interior design books, I also stack my family photo books onto the coffee table. It's personal and meaningful and makes my home feel more lived in."

She also uses art in a similar way.

"I love art of any kind. I have a small collection of pieces from gallery artists that I started curating a few years ago. But my ultimate favorite thing to do is to take my

children's artwork and frame it and display it proudly on our walls. I display their artwork right alongside the gallery pieces," she said. "I love this eclectic mix and, even more importantly, each piece means something to me."

Appeal to all the senses

Julie Levine of West Hartford and Glastonbury's Kim Lamagna, partners in Luxury Living for Less, believes in appealing to multiple senses.

"Color, texture, sound and even taste can add to a room's coziness and ambiance," Levine explained.

She said you might want to create a reading nook within another room in your home, such as a den.

"Start with just a small corner of the room. If you're lucky to have a fireplace, you're halfway there. If not, group together some wonderful candles to cast that warm glow," she said. "Start with a soft wool rug of earthy tones, add one or two comfy chairs with a chenille fabric. Add a soft fuzzy or faux fur throw and pillow, and an ottoman to put your feet up. Place a small table nearby

with great books. Add a table or floor lamp that you can dim. Pour yourself a warm beverage to soothe your soul, and you've got an instant cozy space to relax and enjoy."

Comfort a child

It's not just grown-ups who crave a cozy environment. Michele Cottone Kriticos of MCK Interiors, LLC in Wethersfield, said that a faux fireplace can add a comforting dimension to a child's room.

"There are new ones on the market that are so real both in appearance and functionality. They give the ambiance of crackling wood and the warmth of their embers," she noted. "So many children ask to keep the night light on at bedtime. Placing a faux fireplace in their room will not only give them a soft glow of light, but a rhythmic soothing sound of crackling wood to fall asleep to. It also defuses noise from other areas of the house."

During the day, it may even spark your child's imagination, providing relaxing play options.

"By day they can set up a fireside tea party," she suggested. **WHL**

"Start with a soft wool rug of earthy tones, add one or two comfy chairs with a chenille fabric. Add a soft fuzzy or faux fur throw and pillow, and an ottoman to put your feet up. Place a small table nearby with great books. Add a table or floor lamp that you can dim. Pour yourself a warm beverage to soothe your soul, and you've got an instant cozy space to relax and enjoy."

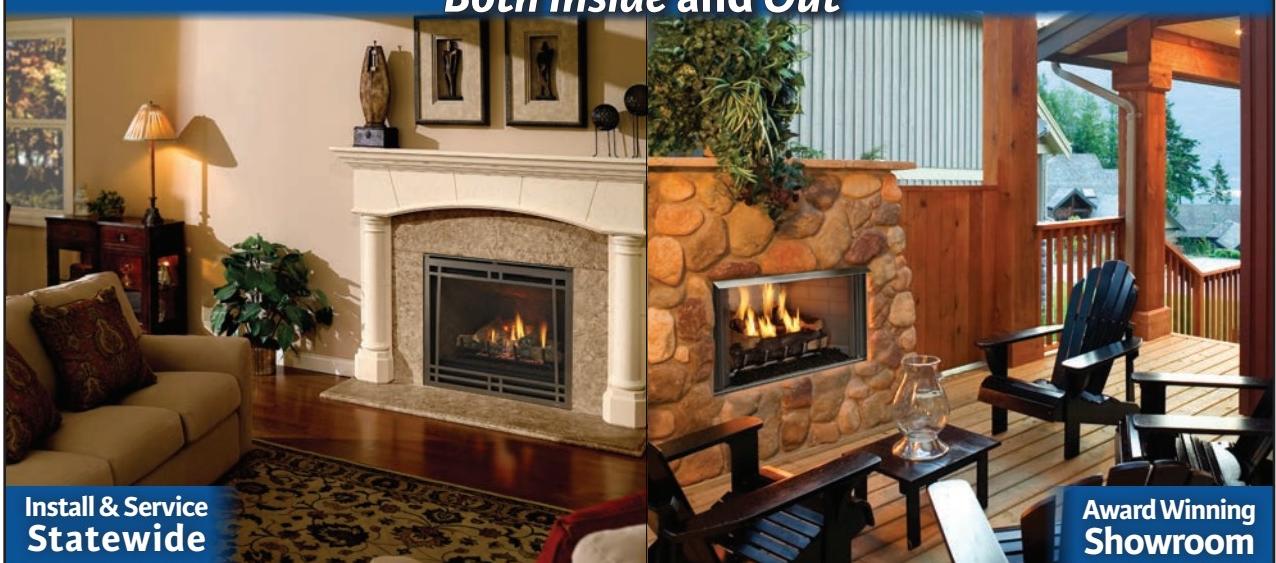
-Julie Levine

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Get Cozy

Netflix and *knit*

Chunky sweaters are chic this season along with other cozy crafts

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

Knitting a chunky sweater is a great way to while away the hours in the winter and it's also very fashionable.

According to Marion Carling, owner of Village Wool in Glastonbury, super bulky yarn, which is knit using giant needles, is in this year.

It's great "if you're a millennial and want to look chic," she said.

"You can make a chunky sweater in a couple hours in front of Netflix."

Carling has knit a scarf out of bulky yarn, but during the blizzard on Thursday, February 9, she was organizing her craft room and getting ready to make hats using thinner yarn.

Knitting hats is just one of the many crafts that are perfect ways to keep warm and cozy when it's cold and snowy. The finished product is also useful for the season.

Taking on a hat is about a five-hour project, though most people tend to knit for an hour or so at a time, Carling said.

"It is a quick project. Sweaters and shawls take longer," Carling said. "Uses up a small amount of yarn."

Carling also crochets, which she said, is quicker than knitting.

"If you want something really, really warm, crocheting is good for

that," she said.

Crocheting is done using double stitches, which makes the end result thicker and warmer, making it great for blankets and throws, though, it's not exclusively for the thick and warm creations.

"The opposite can be true, too," Carling said. "You can make things very racy, open for summer."

Another perk to knitting and crocheting is that they are portable, meaning you can take them with you, have them on hand to pass the time in a variety of places and situations from a game to a mechanic's shop.

Ann Wincze, of Blumen Laden in Canton takes knitting to a different level. After she makes mittens and hats, she felts them.

She intentionally makes them oversized, then puts them in the



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washing machine in hot water to felt them.

"When you agitate the wool it shrinks," Wincze said. "The wool becomes really, really dense. It's much warmer than a knitted mitten."

Making felted mittens is a craft that is well-known to fishermen's wives, Wincze said. In addition, to being warmer, because they are so dense and thick, they are also waterproof.

Wincze also knits scarves, but she doesn't felt them because it's not necessary, she said.

She makes wreaths, too, but that's a craft for other times of the year, she said.

"The wreaths you do in the spring or the summer and the fall and Christmas," she said.

Marilyn Gattinella, co-owner of Close to Home in Glastonbury, likes to quilt. This winter she has been giving a class on making appliquéd blocks.

Appliquéd is a French term for applying shapes to a background, such as a square piece of fabric, Gattinella said. It could be a cutout of a home or pet, or in the case of the quilts she and her students have been making in class, flowers.

"The sections of the quilt are squares with flowers on them," she said.

Gattinella quilts on a sewing machine, which makes it easy to socialize while doing her craft because the sewing machine can be

set up in the family room or by the fireplace, she said.

"Conceivably, you could be sitting at your sewing machine and visiting with your family," Gattinella said.

She was planning to catch up on stitching during the snowstorm.

"I can't wait to be sitting down at my sewing machine and do my stitching," she said.

Quilting is more than a way to pass a few hours, it's about making something from the imagination.

"First of all, it's an example of creating. There are so many different avenues that a quilter could travel down that there's something for everybody, an extension of your personality, a way to share with others," Gattinella said. "Quilters are very famous for sharing."

Quilting can be used for making things such as pillows, table runners and purses.

It's also great to do in the winter.

"The whole winter thing is that we're indoors in our industry, we're not competing with the garden or the boat or the beach home," Gattinella said.

It's also a great thing to do when all the hard work is finished.

"Your family obligations are taken care of and now the me time comes," Gattinella said.

In March, Close to Home will host a sew-a-thon skirt making day for the Whole in the Wall Gang Camp. The skirts will be made out of pieces of T-shirts.

The proceeds will go to the camp.

Not all crafts are for doing at home. At The Claypen, West Hartford, you can paint your own pottery

The inventory changes seasonally, with incense holders and wax warmers and such on the shelves in winter, said Manager Stephanie Yearsley. What's more, it's a great place to thaw out after being out in the cold.

"Our kiln always keeps it warm in here," Yearsley said. "It's always cozy in here."

Painting pottery can be for the family and children, or for a girls night out. There is something on the shelves for everyone and feel free to bring a snack or a bottle of wine to enjoy.

"We have a ton of choices of pottery to choose from: useful to fun, funny stuff," Yearsley said. "You can make yourself a set of dishes or mugs."

Staff is on hand to assist and to offer suggestions or inspiration, or to help with the technical aspects, such as tracing designs, making geometric shapes or painting over lace, Yearsley said.

"It makes a cool design. We have a bucket of lace," she said. "People are always pleased with what they create. We have a saying our kilns are magical."

Staff will also help set things up for children, and there is a special child-friendly palette that has colors that don't turn brown when mixed together.

"We all know that kids will blend it all up," Yearsley said.

Yearsley enjoys when children come back to get their fired masterpiece, she said.

The Claypen also offers glass fusing.

"That's a fun way to spend an hour or two," she said.

The craft involves cutting glass into shapes and having it fired in the kiln. It can be made into anything from a dish to a business card holder.

"There's all different colors and shapes and sizes," Yearsley said. "It goes through the kiln twice. The second time it's over the mold."

Sandy Clifford of Scene Art Bar in Unionville recommends a night of sip & paint.

The bar offers instructor-led painting projects with step-by-step instructions so that even beginners leave with a completed painting.

There's also pick-your-own-painting night, a new offering that gives customers the chance to choose any painting from the bar's library, she said.

The artist is still there to help, but the project is more self-directed.

For an at-home project, Scene Art also offers a DIY paint by numbers kit. The kit, which customers order and then receive in the mail, includes a photo that's been transferred to a canvas with numbers for easy painting, paints, easel and brushes.

There is also beading and making jewelry, scrapbooking, painting on canvas and many other creative ventures. **WHL**

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Get Cozy

Snuggle up

'Tis the season for warm beverages and tasty treats

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

It's snowing, it's raining and you do not have be anywhere. It is the perfect time to grab your favorite blanket, settle into your favorite chair with your book and just enjoy the afternoon. The only thing missing is a warm cup of something and a tasty bite to nibble on.

For some that might mean a cup of tea with a sweet treat, some cookies or a piece of cake, perhaps?



When it comes to tea, there are more options available than one might think that range from the savory to the sweet.

At CulTeavo in Farmington, owner Viviana Pinhasi is passionate about

tea and often holds tea pairings that share what to serve with tea.

"Tea with food may be a similar concept that you do when you pair wine with food," she said. Like wine, a food can complement the tea and

enhance certain aspects of the tea or food.

White tea, for example, has a delicate flavor and is best served with something light or served on its own. Fruit is a good option; apples can



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Get Cozy

balance the flavor, while something like berries intensify the flavor of the tea.

White tea is not processed; rather the leaves are harvested and left to dry. Preparing white tea is simple. Loose leaf tea is put in an infuser; it is best to use 175-degree water and allow the tea to steep for 3 minutes.

Green tea, Pinhasi said, has a stronger, more vegetablelike flavor and tends to be on the salty side. Green tea, she said, goes well with Chinese or Japanese food, or fish dishes. She recommended not having it with Indian food, which is too spicy and would not match well with the spinachlike qualities of the green tea.

White chocolate with matcha, a Chinese spice, goes well with green tea, too.

Because of the green tea's unique flavor, Pinhasi suggests only steeping it for one minute.

An oolong tea is something between a green and black tea and tends to have more caffeine than the green variety.

"It will remind you of a tradition-

al black tea, slightly spicy, more robust," Pinhasi said.

A good pairing with oolong is cheese. A good brie, which is a creamy cheese, will help to bring out the sweetness of the oolong. Parmesan is also a good choice, as that will bring out the spiciness of the tea.

Oolong, Pinhasi said, is best steeped with 185-degree water and steeped for two minutes.

Finally, there is the black tea. This variety is fairly common and usually comes from India. It tends to have a strong flavor and can be made with boiling water and steeped for as long as five minutes.

For those who have a sweet tooth, black tea is a great option to enjoy with scones or shortbread.

Pinhasi likes to enjoy a plain scone with some hibiscus-infused butter.

She also offers an interesting option at her tea shop: honey infused with smoked tea.

All teas come from the same

plant, the variations from white to black and everything in between is created through the different ways of processing the leaves. Leaves are simply dried for white tea, leaves are harvested then dehydrated to make green tea. To make oolong tea, the leaves are allowed to start to oxidize before being exposed to heat that stops this process. With black tea, the oxidation process continues for a longer period of time.

For those who think that tea is a stuffy drink, the kind where a pinky is held out while taking dainty sips, Pinhasi said it is fine to slurp tea. Doing so, she said, allows air to be drawn in with each sip and helps to enhance the flavor of the tea.

There is also a way to get around the temperature differences for having the best cup of tea. That is to try an electric teakettle that enables the user to select a temperature, thus assuring the perfect cup of tea.

When it comes to coffee, there are staunch supporters of simply drinking the java straight up and not bothering

with a bite.

That is how Marie Engel, co-owner and manager of J. Renee Coffee Roasters in West Hartford, enjoys her coffee.

"When I come in in the morning I have my "Marie-acano." It's an Americano, they put a little spin on it. That's it for me," she said.

There are others, Engel noted, that prefer to eat something with their coffee.

There are those who prefer to have something savory. The shop offers a Greek spanakopita, spinach and feta wrapped in phyllo dough.

"It's something to go with plain coffee," Engel said.

"People who like milk-based drinks like something sweet," she said, adding that these folks gravitate toward scones.

"It's a matter of taste," Engel said.

"What really sells, because our coffees are espresso-based, is biscotti," Engel continued. "They like to dip it in their coffee. It's very traditional. It's the Italian way." **WHL**

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Get Cozy

Warm up

There's still time to get cozy by the fire

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

Warm and cozy go together, and it's hard to be warm when heat is going up the chimney.

"The heat in your home is escaping up that chimney, even with a fire going," said Sherry Kozikowski, co-owner of Valley Fireplace and Stove in Canton. "The damper has to be open for the smoke to exit, but heat can exit, too. Generally, people leave the damper open all the time, so more heat escapes up the chimney."

For that reason, she suggests a glass door enclosure over the front of the fireplace that can remain open while enjoying a fire, and then closed for all other times.

Kozikowski also recommends installing a supplemental heating system such as a wood, pellet or gas stove that will not only stop the heat from escaping, it will become a supplemental heating system. From the time a choice is made to completed installation is one to two weeks.

"Gas is the cheapest," she said, which could be one of the reasons it's also the most popular.

"It's so easy," she said. "No hauling wood or pellets ... [and] it can come on automatically."

Avon Plumbing & Heating, located in Avon, has been installing a wide variety of gas log fireplace sets in new and existing homes and condominiums.

"It eliminates the hassle of burning wood and burns considerably cleaner," according to Stacy Moore, project manager and designer. "With the click of a button, you transform your fireplace into a beau-

tiful, warm, glowing fire anywhere in your home. The gas fireplace sets can be installed with either propane or natural gas.

The project takes only a day, providing the chimney is clean and a gas line has already been installed.

Projects can take up to three weeks if additional renovations are desired, such as resurfacing or encasing the fireplace or adding a cabinet to hold a flat screen television above it.

"You can be creative," Moore said, because even if you do not have a fireplace in your home, you can add a gas firebox created from a metal hearth with a wood surround.



A fireplace will be the focus of whatever room it's in. Originally, their mantels were installed to catch smoke, but have since become more of a decorative piece.

"If you want to cozy it up," Hayley Bryden, a designer at Ehrlich Interiors in Farmington, recommended "replacing the basic shelf of a mantel with a large piece of reclaimed wood. To give more visual interest to this concept, try incorporating some

ornate brackets underneath the reclaimed wood."

If that's not your style, she also suggested classing up a fireplace by adding stand-alone, floor-to-ceiling columns on either side of the fireplace. Rather than the traditional brick, large porcelain tiles would also add more style to the fireplace and can help achieve a clean, modern look.

"If you are feeling adventurous, try painting a traditional-looking mantel a fun, saturated accent color," Bryden said.

Building a surround to encase it is another decorating option.

"Bookcases are super cozy," she said. "They can be used to display much more than books and can be filled with family photos in decorative frames."

To accessorize, Bryden likes to place a large mirror over the fireplace. "It could be an antique if that's your style," she said.

Lighting, such as sconces on either side of the fireplace, can also add warmth, complementing the fire below.

To accessorize a wooden mantel, she said add iron, such as a large sculptured piece, along with a few smaller items.

But none of that is even necessary.

Just making a fire makes for a cozier atmosphere, said Kurt Wabrek, who with his wife, owns New England Patio and Hearth with stores in Canton and Wethersfield.

Only three things are essential: dry wood, a poker and a spark guard.

Grates, tool sets and screens come in a variety of styles, so that choosing them "is a matter of personal taste as well as function."

"Dry wood burns cleaner and nicer," Wabrek said, noting that crisscrossing the wood as you stack it allows more air flow, a better fire and thus a more pleasant experience.

While it's common sense, he said it bears repeating that safety is key. The flue should be open before a fire is lit and ashes must be disposed of safely. **WHL**

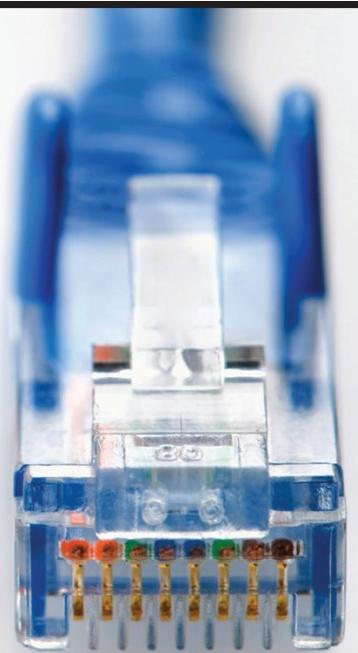
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LIFE in the kitchen

with chef Louise Albin

by Lynn Woike
Editor

In October, Louise Albin tripled the size of her 24-year-old catering business, adding Newington's Indian Hill Country Club to Cafe Louise on New Britain Avenue. Born in Hartford, Albin was raised in West Hartford.

"I've always been surrounded by chefs and great cooks in my French Canadian family. I have a cousin who was an award-winning Escoffier Chef years ago. In high school I was part of a Gourmet Cooking Club, so it's always been in my blood and family."

In the mid-'70s, Albin majored in French literature at Trinity College in Hartford.

"I spent a year and a half studying in Paris and that was before TV's Food Network," she said, recalling that one of her friends in the same program found a small French cooking school in the Latin Quarter that was run for beginning students by dietitians, not by chefs.

"It was hands on. You'd partner up and choose different parts of the meal to work on each week," she said, adding that for very little money, they also got to sit down and enjoy eating the meal.

"That gave me a good basis. I got all the recipes," she said.

After college, she said she was fascinated by restaurants and took a job at The Rising Sun, a Japanese restaurant in the Hartford Civic Center.

Soon, she became the manager and realized she liked working the front of the house more than she liked working in the kitchen.

Moving to Oregon in the 1980s, she worked at a large restaurant while also starting a catering service from her home she called Café Louise.

"I literally went door to door in wealthy neighborhoods" leaving off menus that got her catering basic foods such as soups, chilies and lasagna. While catering a cocktail party for a doctor and his wife, "it was like an epiphany. This is way too much fun. I finally figured out what I wanted to be when I grew up."

She moved home and took the 650-square-foot space on New Britain Avenue in January 1993.

"When I started on New Britain Ave, it was a café with seating for 12. We used to teach cooking workshops ... [and] offered off-site catering with servers and bartenders as well as a lot of clients picking up platters they had pre-ordered for their parties. It was three distinct businesses and it was crazy, but I did a little bit of everything. I started on a wing and prayer," she said.

A year later she met her husband and when she got had children, she gave up the workshops and the café, choosing to focus on catering.



Photo by Lynn Woike

For more than four years, David Tolly has presided over the kitchen and together they've won "best" awards.

Last summer, the opportunity presented itself to sign a five-year lease agreement with Indian Hill Country Club to provide all food services. In addition to the 200-seat ballroom available to rent, there's the grill and a new restaurant upstairs – La Colline, which means The Hill – that will seat 40. It will be open for dinner Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and for brunch on Sunday. The room was completely redone, with museum tracking installed to hang artwork that, at times, will be paired with themed foods for special events.

A Saint Patrick's Day dinner is planned for March 2 from 6-9 p.m. The menu of traditional Irish foods reinterpreted by Café Louise will include deviled quail eggs with caviar, smoked haddock soup shooters, Guinness mac 'n' cheese with crumbled rashers, corned beef and cabbage pierogi, grilled rack of lamb with marmalade whiskey glaze, and chocolate Guinness cupcakes with whiskey ganache and Baileys buttercream frosting.

While Indian Hill is a private club, its restaurants are open to the public.

When Albin became the culinary director, she also moved her catering operation to the much larger kitchen in Newington.

Not wanting to give up her flagship location, she's converting that back into something similar to when she first opened, with seating for eight to 10 people, including a bar along the front window with five stools. There will be to-go dinners such as pot roast, chicken piccata and quiche, along with wraps, soups, chili, stews, salads and fresh baked goods – all in keeping with her original slogan, "Eclectic Gourmet Foods."

Pastry chef Shannon Chamberlin, who has been with Albin for 18 months, will manage the café.

There will be gluten-free and vegan options both in West Hartford and Newington.

"This business has always fed my soul. My business is about nurturing and nourishing people. It's so satisfying to make people happy, see their expressions and feel the connection through food making their event not only successful, but also most satisfying and one that creates memories for years to come."

Saying that her business "came out of pure passion, and drive, too," her advice to others is "Follow your passion. Just do it and dive in – not without planning, obviously, but if you follow your passion you will succeed. ... It's not always easy, but if you create a great support group to nudge you along you will succeed." **WHL**

Louise Albin answered some questions to offer more insight on her personality.

Q: What's your "secret weapon" ingredient?

A: I can't pinpoint one particular ingredient because we use so many different ingredients for our diverse menus. I think the true secret weapon is passion and creativity.

Q: What's your least favorite food?

A: Green peppers, since I was a child – otherwise I'll eat pretty much anything except bugs.

Q: What is the one cooking technique that everyone should know how to do?

A: How to make a roux for a smooth, non-lumpy sauce. If you can make a sauce then you can create so many wonderful dishes. So, my advice is to master making a roux and let the possibilities grow from there.

Q: If you could take any celebrity chef out to dinner, who would it be and where would you take them?

A: Anthony Bourdain because he has eaten all over the world. We'd go to a small French-Canadian restaurant in Quebec City called Aux Anciens Canadiens for some old-time and authentic French-Canadian food that I grew up with like boudain, tortiere, maple syrup pie, tire d'erable ... yum!

Q: What is your favorite cookbook?

A: "The Frog Commissary." It was a restaurant and catering company in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh but is no longer in business and I've incorporated some of their recipes into ours since I first started catering in Eugene, Oregon in the '80s. It was out of print but came back into print a few years ago.

Q: What spice describes your personality?

A: Somewhere between sugar and cayenne, depends on the day. Ask my staff, they'll confirm this.

Q: If you weren't a chef, what would you be?

A: Either fashion or make-up. I've always been a clotheshorse. It's like food, it's creative, fun, some things work and others don't always. Experimenting makes it all fun.

Q: What's your "go to" staple dish?

A: My particular "go to" dish is Our Signature Tarragon Chicken Salad with Grapes and Walnuts.

Q: What do you like to cook when having guests to your home?

A: Boeuf bourguignon, the classic French dish, or coq au vin. Both are very comforting to me and delicious, too.

Q: It's your last meal on earth. What's on your plate?

A: Foie gras because when I eat it, I'm totally present and in the moment with every incredible, rich bite.

Lifelong learning

University of Hartford names new director of its Presidents' College

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

Steve Metcalf was convinced he was retired. He had spent 20 years working at the Hartford Courant as a classical music critic, served as music director for several regional theaters, composed the score for an Off Broadway musical as well as for other shows, and was an advisor to the Bushnell Center for Performing Arts.

In 2007 he returned to his alma mater, The Hartt School as director of the instrumental studies program. He helped to found the Richard P. Garmany Chamber Music Series and ran it until last year. He has been a member of the Hartt Board of Trustee's since 2004.

"Then I thought I had retired, and this opportunity came along," he said of his position as director of

all colleges and universities have an extension of this kind."

Among the offerings this spring are "The First Psychological Novel: Jane Austen's 'Emma,'" facilitated by Catherine Stevenson; "Mars, 'The Red Planet,'" with James McDonald and "Ancient Nubia: Land of Gold," with Colleen Manessa Darnell.

Topics cover such areas as art and architecture, current events and history, literature and language, music, dance, film, and science and technology. Held during the day, courses tend to attract retirees.

While he has never taken any of the program's courses, he has given lectures and talks.

"Some lectures take place at senior communities in the area," such as Duncaster and The McAughley, Metcalf said.

"I just want it to be as interesting and as imaginative as it can be."

-Steve Metcalf

the University of Hartford Presidents' College, a non-credit program for adults that offers courses to the wider community taught by university faculty.

"My immediate attention is to do credit to this great program and its history," Metcalf said just a few weeks after having accepted the position.

The Presidents' College was founded and run by former university president Humphrey Tonkin, and more recently by Joe Voelker, an English professor at the University of Hartford and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Calling the Presidents' College a "mini academy" for its extensive range of topics, Metcalf said, "I think

The Presidents' College offers learning opportunities on a variety of topics, but was never meant to offer work-related skills.

Rather, Metcalf said, those who enroll "are here for the love of learning and widening their understanding of the world. They all say what a pleasure it is. They are keen to learn, very responsive."

As older learners, he said, they are not the type to idly sit by, but are an active group.

"They are a cohort of civic-minded people, very involved in their community," Metcalf said. "I think they almost bristle at being called retirees."

Metcalf grew up in Schenectady, New York and attended The Hartt



Photo by Alicia B. Smith

School in the 1960s.

"My association with The Hartt School and University of Hartford reaches back half a century," he said.

He and his wife settled in West Hartford where they have lived for more than 30 years, raising three daughters.

Metcalf's background is primarily in the arts and he knows how much the arts have been a part of the Presidents' College in the past and he plans to continue that tradition.

This spring, Michael Lancaster, former director of the Hartford Symphony, will be offering a course. Later in the spring, Willy Waters, former director of the Connecticut Opera Company will offer a course on Puccini's "La Bohème."

Metcalf said he has been thinking of ways to add his own ideas to the well-established program. One of them is to find ways to introduce the

program to younger learners. Classes meet during the day and thus are not conducive to those who work. It may be that the program begins to offer occasional courses in the evenings or on weekends.

"I am certainly going to explore that," Metcalf said.

Using his background in journalism, Metcalf said he was also interested in developing courses on journalism and the press in the future, inspired, in part, by recent criticism of the press by the new presidential administration.

"There could hardly be a more timely topic," he said.

"I am very honored and very flattered to take the reins of this great program. I just want it to remain something that is relevant, timely, edifying to people – and fun. I just want it to be as interesting and as imaginative as it can be." **WHL**

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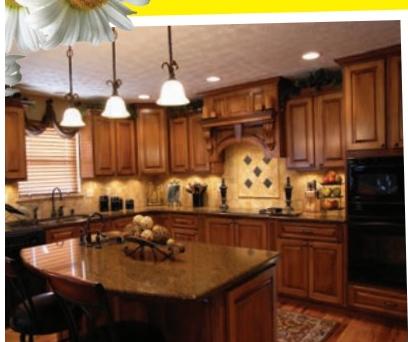
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LIFE MAGAZINE

Going with the FLOW

Chamber of commerce offers new group to young entrepreneurs

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

The West Hartford Chamber of Commerce, established in 1913, has catered to the needs of professionals across a variety of businesses throughout its history. Many of its members are longtime company owners and industry leaders.

What seemed to be missing was a niche for younger professionals, men and women who are in business but who may not have the longevity and expertise of many of the established members.

Ryan Keating of the Keating Agency Insurance is one such businessman.

He said that much of his networking experience involved working with young professionals in California and Texas. The group he founded in Dallas eventually grew to 200 members. He is anxious to tap into that enthusiasm, and broaden the demographics of the traditional chamber membership, now that he's returned to West Hartford. His new group is called Future Leaders of West Hartford, or FLOW.

Since December he has been working with Morgan Hilyard, the chamber's associate director of communications, special events and administration.

When Keating presented his idea to the board of directors, he explained that the group's goals included diversifying the demographics, gaining more restaurant members and offering networking opportunities to young professionals.

The group would have a membership fee and begin small – with about 10 members initially – with the hopes of

growing. It would have its own board that would report to the chamber's board. FLOW would host regular networking events, have one or two community service projects each year and one large annual event.

With each meeting, Keating said, new people stopped in to learn more and the group's first official event in February sold out.

Hilyard explained that the chamber consists of predominantly experienced businessmen and women. She hoped FLOW would appeal to the millennial group. This particular group, she said, tends to have

"If you live in West Hartford, work in West Hartford, it's a great opportunity to bring that all together."

—Ryan Keating

more difficulty socializing and she believes FLOW will get these young professionals talking to one another face to face and help them develop better networking skills.

"West Hartford is an amazing place," Keating said. "People are moving here because it's West Hartford. It's hard to find a circle of influence, I hope this group can be an avenue for that."

When Keating returned to work in his family business, he had an advantage in that the business has been around for 50 years. Entrepreneurs just

getting started don't typically have access to that kind of support and experience.

He said the group is targeting ages 21-41 and hopes to attract a mix of businesses.

"Why we are going with future leaders, you could be ending one career and going on to the next," Keating said.

Hilyard explained that the chamber has hosted workshops for members on topics relating to marketing and technology, such as building a Facebook page, which may be important for some members, but that younger professionals may already have these skills. Therefore, FLOW will look to incorporate information on topics that will benefit younger, less experienced members, including how to make a presentation to a large group or resume writing – skills that experienced businessmen and women learned to do long ago.

"Social media is a big one," Keating said.

Many younger professionals may have extensive experience using a variety of social media outlets, however, FLOW can be a resource in teaching them how to use the platforms as a professional.

"There is a concentration of young professional groups in the area," which may offer some collaborative opportunities in the future, Keating said.

He said he is excited to take on this challenge.

"West Hartford provided me as a child to look ahead, have a family, help make an impact for other young adults," he said. "Connecticut, as a whole, is not a place you think of for young people; we compete with Boston and New



Ryan Keating and Morgan Hilyard are introducing a new group to the local chamber – FLOW, or Future Leaders of West Hartford – as a way to get younger professionals involved.

York, places where young professionals want to live."

This is not the case here, said Keating, who sees young professionals are moving to West Hartford.

"This can align very well with the direction of where the town is going," he said of FLOW.

The West Hartford Chamber's website will dedicate a page to FLOW so members can keep on top of meetings and other events.

One of the things that Keating has noticed is that the Center and Blue Back Square commercial areas draw many people from out of town.

FLOW will help young professionals meet local entrepreneurs.

"If you live in West Hartford, work in West Hartford, it's a great opportunity to bring that all together."

Keating envisions 2017 will be a branding year for FLOW as the group establishes itself and grows its membership.

"As we develop the name, next year we'll put together committees; 2018 will be the big year for FLOW," he said.

"We encourage people to get involved now, take ownership," added Hilyard. **WHL**

Photo by Alicia B. Smith

News notes

Officials react to governor's budget plan

While Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's proposed budget plan for the next two years calls for greater equity among the state's municipalities, it would leave West Hartford and many other local towns with millions less in state aid by shifting more funds away from them to struggling cities.

Malloy recently released a \$40.6 billion two-year budget, which, for one, realigns the state's Education Cost Sharing formula in a way the governor said is more equitable.

Although Mayor Shari Cantor said she recognizes fairness was the intent of the ECS formula adjustment by shifting funds away from wealthier communities to struggling urban centers, the actual result is harmful to a community like West Hartford that has residents of all economic standings.

"We're a diverse community. We have a middle class component that is struggling with our cost of living and we have a component that is more financially stressed," she said. "This is coming on the backs of our students. Twenty-two percent of our students are on free and reduced lunch. We have students that require more resources so that everyone gets the benefit of a quality education. We're ranked 130 out of 169 towns in spending per pupil and we've done everything right to educate an economically, racially and ethnically diverse community. We are an example of how to do things combining all the functions possible between the town and the Board of Education. This will undo a lot of the progress that we've made."

Among other changes in state aid – which in totality equate to more than a \$14 million impact in the next fiscal year on local property taxes, according to Town Manager Ron Van Winkle – the town will see a \$8.5 million loss in ECS funds when the grant is reduced from \$20.96 in the current fiscal year to \$12.4 million in the next.

In addition to ECS reduction, the budget proposes that the board now contribute 10 percent of teachers' salaries to the teachers' pension plan. That equates to a new \$8 million dollar expense.

Although the town will receive

a new special education grant of just more than \$6 million, the board will lose what is known as "excess cost" funding of nearly \$4 million, which covers high cost special education, for an ultimate \$14.5 million reduction in education aid, or 9.2 percent of the Board of Education's last adopted budget.

Offsetting those numbers, to a minor degree, are proposed increases, or in some cases partial funding, for the state's Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program, Local Capital Improvement funds and the municipal revenue sharing grant.

An additional \$2.5 million in funding will be granted to balance revenue loss from the state required lower mill rate on motor vehicles. That amount notwithstanding, because Van Winkle said from a budgeting perspective it is a wash as the revenue is lost, the town will only see roughly \$500,000 in increased municipal aid.

By Tuesday, Feb. 14, Cantor said she had spoken multiple times with the town's state legislators, all of whom, she said, are committed to fighting for the town and its students.

While Cantor said she appreciates the intent of the budget to not raise taxes, she said the burden will just be transferred under the proposal to the towns, which would have to levy much higher tax rates to close the budget gap.

Cantor is urging state legislators to consider a Connecticut Conference of Municipalities proposal to make adjustments to the sales tax to help solve fiscal challenges.

For now, Van Winkle said he will craft a budget – which he is scheduled to present March 8 – that is a starting point and contains several alternatives and decisions that must be made based on what transpires with the state budget.

Layoffs are "without question" needed to balance the budget, he said, noting they will be "difficult for the community."

Mayor's proclamation celebrates diversity, rally for immigrant and refugee rights held

Mayor Shari Cantor issued a proclamation Feb. 14 celebrating the diversity of West Hartford and its

commitment to welcoming and respecting all citizens, including those "seeking safety and refuge and a place in the great American dream."

The proclamation was a result, she said, of events that have taken place on both the national and local level in recent weeks, specifically with regard to President Donald Trump's executive order to ban travel from seven Muslim-majority countries.

The West Hartford Rally for Immigrant and Refugee Rights was held in front of Town Hall Feb. 1, during which hundreds of residents came out to offer support to refugees and immigrants.

The rally was a peaceful demonstration.

"I think it's important to be in support of a positive, peaceful message," volunteers and Board of Education member Tammy Exum said. "So many of us in West Hartford are passionate about inclusiveness and equity."

During the rally, Cantor told the crowd that the West Hartford community would continue to stand in opposition to the ban and continue to welcome immigrant and refugee families into the community.

"This is not who our community is, this is not who our state is and this is not who our country is," she said. "This is not who we are. We are better."

Cantor said she was made aware of the fact that a petition was circulating at that time requesting that the town be designated a "Sanctuary City," a municipality that has a policy of protecting unauthorized immigrants by refusing to turn them over to the federal government for deportation and ensuring they have access to town or city services.

Cantor stressed opted not to give the town the formal status, but issued the proclamation celebrating the community's diversity, and committing the town's leadership to maintaining the town as a welcoming and inclusive place that treats all residents equitably and with respect.

"America is morally and economically stronger because of the immigrants that have made this country their home," she said. **WHL**



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KEITH TURLEY, Publisher

EDITORIAL

Abigail Albair, Executive Editor

aalbair@turleyct.com

Lynn Woike, Editor

John Fitts, Assistant Editor

Alicia B. Smith, Associate Editor

STAFF WRITERS

**Allie Rivera, Mara Dresner,
David Heuschkel, Sloan Brewster**

ADVERTISING SALES

Lisa Oster-Zippin

lisa@turleyct.com,
860-264-5652

PAGE DESIGNERS

**Daniel Kornegay, Cynthia Martel,
Robert Sirois**

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT

Barbara Ouellette, Production Manager
ads@turleyct.com, 860-264-5523

Maureen LaBier, Production Assistant

**Daniel Kornegay, Corley Fleming, Cynthia Martel,
Kathy Kokoszka, Mary Grimes**

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Writer's block

Adulting

by Lynn Woike
Editor

As another birthday approaches, age-related topics have again surfaced. This year, it's the concept of adulting. Along with all other nouns turned into verbs by way of the horrific phenomenon of verbing – inbox, architect, dialogue – I have avoided it, but right now I find myself embracing the concept.

Adulting. It means to conduct yourself in an adult manner, to engage in behaviors associated with adulthood.

You might have noticed it happening the first time you willingly went to bed early to get a good night's sleep, or when no one told you to eat your meal before dessert, but you did anyway, or when you did your laundry before you ran out of clean underwear.

There seems to be a self-congratulatory vein to this; I encounter 20-somethings who seem to want a merit badge, or, at the very least, applause, for remembering their mother's birthday or paying their bills on time.

Adulting is more than cooking one meal for yourself one night this week. It's feeling fulfilled by shopping for ingredients, making three meals a day, every day, and not leaving all the dirty dishes in the sink.

It's being happy to wear comfortable shoes and excited to have a new sponge for washing the dishes. It's gratitude for getting the closest possible parking spot to your destination when it's raining or your hip hurts. It's the joy of being able to find the mate of every sock coming out of the dryer.

Watching Netflix, drinking beer and ordering pizza delivered is not adulting.

Adulting is when you enter Best Buy and walk right past all the latest must-have electronic gadgets and helpful gizmos, and buy an iron, or maybe a vacuum cleaner. It's doing your own taxes, not ignoring your doctor's advice and being able to recognize fake news.

The first time adulting smacks you might be when you look around for an adult to step up and straighten out a situation only to realize you're the person to whom everyone else is turning.

It's a coming of age, but not at a particular age, like the right to drive or consume alcohol or get married without parental permission. For the most part, it creeps up on you. You begin to accept that the world does not single you out as a Special Snowflake.

I never realized the whole concept needed a word. It is more or less just what you do when you grow up. Of course, I also never imagined we need verbs such as glamping, photobombing, sexting or conversating.

I have been adulting since graduating high school, and I can tell you that it gets old – especially when doing it alone. It's not a whole heap of fun when something needs doing and it's clear there is no one else to do it but you.

It never occurred to me to seek recognition. It was just expected – at least in my family. Plus, I wanted to be making my own decisions without shame, remorse or explanation. I think perhaps the word is really meant to be used not by senior citizens like myself, but by individuals in their 20s

or 30s who are still experimenting with adulthood.

Those who know me well know that I don't so much adult as over-adult. I've learned it's a control issue.

I have a difficult time going with the flow or flying by the seat of my pants. I have a need to plot things out, including contingency plans for every variation and anything that could possibly go wrong. I blame it on my years as a Girl Scout with the motto: be prepared.

I also have a habit of trying to be too responsible by doing too much. I'm always trying to accomplish one more thing on my never-ending to-do list. I can't leave dirty dishes in the sink overnight (thankfully, I have no problem letting them drip dry on the counter); I can't take clothes out of the dryer without immediately hanging and folding them (but I can then leave them hanging on door knobs and over the top of a door).

With each birthday, my youth becomes a more distant memory, so my goal this year is to cut back on the adulting and learn to kid again. I don't know if my hip will allow me to climb a tree, or if I want to go sledding, but I would like to put playing back into my vocabulary. The best I seem to know how to do is go for a walk or curl up with a book and a cat. It's time to pick up some of my long-ignored arts and crafts projects, and make it a point to dance around the house. To learn more about play, I will seek more time with my 8-year-old granddaughter so we can color, have tea parties and make fairy houses. **WHL**



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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



In like a lion, out like a lamb?

The month of March is one that can be beautiful, but also quite volatile here in Connecticut.

When it comes to temperature – on the first day of the month 24 degrees is the average low, 42 is the average high. By the end of the month, the average low goes up to 33 while the high

warms to 54. Not a bad, as we transition from winter to spring, officially on the 20th (at 6:29 a.m.) with the Vernal Equinox. When it comes to the extremes of the month, the coldest temperature was achieved in 1967 and 2003 when the low was -6 (on the 19th and 7th, respectively).

Also since records have been kept, for the Greater Hartford Area, 89 degrees is the warmest it has been – on the 31st in 1998.

When it comes to snow, March is historically a month featuring some of the more notable storms. Take for instance the Blizzard of 1888, over 50 inch-

es of snow fell in Middletown. Then more recently, there was the Storm of the Century (Storm Josh), on the 13th in 1993. An event that brought over a foot of snow, a lot of sleet, and a strong wind. So by no means are we immune to the bigger ones, but the average (based on a 30 year timespan) is just 6.4 inches. **WHL**

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WEST HARTFORD – Nicely updated colonial with new granite kitchen, stainless steel appliances, freshly painted throughout, first flr den/office, 2 car att garage, fenced in yard. 3 season porch, Master bed & bath. \$409,900

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Paul Lanouette

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Lanouette
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